

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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## THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

MISS HALCOMBE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Limmeridge House.

NOVEMBER 27. My forebodings are realised. The marriage is fixed for the twenty-third of December.

The day after we left for Polesdean Lodge, Sir Percival wrote, it seems, to Mr. Fairlie, to say that the necessary repairs and alterations in his house in Hampshire would occupy a much longer time in completion than he had originally anticipated. The proper estimates were to be submitted to him as soon as possible; and it would greatly facilitate his entering into definite arrangements with the workpeople, if he could be informed of the exact period at which the wedding ceremony might be expected to take place. He could then make all his calculations in reference to time, besides writing the necessary apologies to friends who had been engaged to visit him that winter, and who could not, of course, be received when the house was in the hands of the workmen.

To this letter Mr. Fairlie had replied by requesting Sir Percival himself to suggest a day for the marriage, subject to Miss Fairlie's approval, which her guardian willingly undertook to do his best to obtain. Sir Percival wrote back by the next post, and proposed (in accordance with his own views and wishes, from the first) the latter part of December—perhaps the twenty-third, or twenty-fourth, or any other day that the lady and her guardian might prefer. The lady not being at hand to speak for herself, her guardian had decided, in her absence, on the earliest day mentioned—the twenty-third of December—and had written to read us to Limmeridge in consequence.

After explaining these particulars to me at a private interview, yesterday, Mr. Fairlie suggested, in his most amiable manner, that I should open the necessary negotiations to-day. Feeling that resistance was useless, unless I could first obtain Laura's authority to make it, I consented to speak to her, but declared, at the same time, that I would on no consideration undertake to gain her consent to Sir Percival's wishes. Mr. Fairlie complimented me on my "excellent conscience," much as he would have complimented me, if we had been out walking, on my "excellent consti-

tution," and seemed perfectly satisfied, so far, with having simply shifted one more family responsibility from his own shoulders to mine.

This morning, I spoke to Laura as I had promised. The composure—I may almost say, the insensibility—which she has so strangely and so resolutely maintained ever since Sir Percival left us, was not proof against the shock of the news I had to tell her. She turned pale, and trembled violently.

"Not so soon!" she pleaded. "Oh, Marian, not so soon!"

The slightest hint she could give was enough for me. I rose to leave the room, and fight her battle for her at once with Mr. Fairlie.

Just as my hand was on the door, she caught fast hold of my dress, and stopped me.

"Let me go!" I said. "My tongue burns to tell your uncle that he and Sir Percival are not to have it all their own way."

She sighed bitterly, and still held my dress.

"No!" she said, faintly. "Too late, Marian—too late!"

"Not a minute too late," I retorted. "The question of time is *our* question—and trust me Laura, to take a woman's full advantage of it."

I unclasped her hand from my gown while I spoke; but she slipped both her arms round my waist at the same moment, and held me more effectually than ever.

"It will only involve us in more trouble and more confusion," she said. "It will set you and my uncle at variance, and bring Sir Percival here again with fresh causes of complaint—"

"So much the better!" I cried out, passionately. "Who cares for his causes of complaint? Are you to break your heart to set his mind at ease? No man under heaven deserves these sacrifices from us women. Men! They are the enemies of our innocence and our peace—they drag us away from our parents' love and our sisters' friendship—they take us body and soul to themselves, and fasten our helpless lives to theirs as they chain up a dog to his kennel. And what does the best of them give us in return? Let me go, Laura—I'm mad when I think of it!"

The tears—miserable, weak, women's tears of vexation and rage—started to my eyes. She smiled sadly; and put her handkerchief over my face, to hide for me the betrayal of my own weakness—the weakness of all others which she knew that I most despised.

"Oh, Marian!" she said. "*You* crying! Think what you would say to me, if the places were changed, and if those tears were mine. All your love and courage and devotion will not alter what *must* happen, sooner or later. Let my uncle have his way. Let us have no more troubles and heart-burnings that any sacrifice of mine can prevent. Say you will live with me, Marian, when I am married—and say no more."

But I did say more. I forced back the contemptible tears that were no relief to me, and that only distressed her; and reasoned and pleaded as calmly as I could. It was of no avail. She made me twice repeat the promise to live with her when she was married, and then suddenly asked a question which turned my sorrow and my sympathy for her into a new direction.

"While we were at Polesdean," she said, "you had a letter, Marian—"

Her altered tone; the abrupt manner in which she looked away from me, and hid her face on my shoulder; the hesitation which silenced her before she had completed her question, all told me, but too plainly, to whom the half-expressed inquiry pointed.

"I thought, Laura, that you and I were never to refer to him again," I said gently,

"You had a letter from him?" she persisted.

"Yes," I replied, "if you must know it."

"Do you mean to write to him again?"

I hesitated. I had been afraid to tell her of his absence from England, or of the manner in which my exertions to serve his new hopes and projects had connected me with his departure. What answer could I make? He was gone where no letters could reach him for months, perhaps for years, to come.

"Suppose I do mean to write to him again," I said at last. "What, then, Laura?"

Her cheek grew burning hot against my neck; and her arms trembled and tightened round me.

"Don't tell him about the *twenty-third*," she whispered. "Promise, Marian—prayer promise you will not even mention my name to him when you write next."

I gave the promise. No words can say how sorrowfully I gave it. She instantly took her arm from my waist, walked away to the window, and stood looking out, with her back to me. After a moment she spoke once more, but without turning round, without allowing me to catch the smallest glimpse of her face.

"Are you going to my uncle's room?" she asked. "Will you say that I consent to whatever arrangement he may think best? Never mind leaving me, Marian. I shall be better alone for a little while."

I went out. If, as soon as I got into the passage, I could have transported Mr. Fairlie and Sir Percival Glyde to the uttermost ends of the earth, by lifting one of my fingers, that finger would have been raised without an instant's hesitation. For once, my unhappy temper now stood my friend. I should have broken down altogether and burst into a violent fit of crying, if my tears had not been all burnt up in the heat of my anger. As it was, I dashed

into Mr. Fairlie's room—called to him as harshly as possible, "Laura consents to the *twenty-third*"—and dashed out again without waiting for a word of answer. I banged the door after me; and I hope I shattered Mr. Fairlie's nervous system for the rest of the day.

28th. This morning, I read poor Hartright's farewell letter over again; a doubt having crossed my mind, since yesterday, whether I am acting wisely in concealing the fact of his departure from Laura.

On reflection, I still think I am right. The allusions in his letter to the preparations made for the expedition to Central America, all show that the leaders of it know it to be dangerous. If the discovery of this makes me uneasy, what would it make her? It is bad enough to feel that his departure has deprived us of the friend of all others to whose devotion we could trust, in the hour of need, if ever that hour comes and finds us helpless. But it is far worse to know that he has gone from us to face the perils of a bad climate, a wild country, and a disturbed population. Surely it would be a cruel candour to tell Laura this, without a pressing and a positive necessity for it?

I almost doubt whether I ought not to go a step farther, and burn the letter at once, for fear of its one day falling into wrong hands. It not only refers to Laura in terms which ought to remain a secret for ever between the writer and me; but it reiterates his suspicion—so obstinate, so unaccountable, and so alarming—that he has been secretly watched since he left Limmeridge. He declares that he saw the faces of the two strange men, who followed him about the streets of London, watching him among the crowd which gathered at Liverpool to see the expedition embark; and he positively asserts that he heard the name of Anne Catherick pronounced behind him, as he got into the boat. His own words are, "These events have a meaning, these events must lead to a result. The mystery of Anne Catherick is *not* cleared up yet. She may never cross my path again; but if ever she crosses yours, make better use of the opportunity, Miss Halcombe, than I made of it. I speak on strong conviction; I entreat you to remember what I say." These are his own expressions. There is no danger of my forgetting them—my memory is only too ready to dwell on any words of Hartright's that refer to Anne Catherick. But there is danger in my keeping the letter. The merest accident might place it at the mercy of strangers. I may fall ill; I may die—better to burn it at once, and have one anxiety the less.

It is burnt! The ashes of his farewell letter—the last he may ever write to me—lie in a few black fragments on the hearth. Is this the sad end to all that sad story? Oh, not the end—surely, surely, not the end already!

29th. The preparations for the marriage have begun. The dressmaker has come to receive her orders. Laura is perfectly impassive, perfectly careless about the question of all others

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in which a woman's personal interests are most closely bound up. She has left it all to the dressmaker and to me. If poor Hartright had been the baronet, and the husband of her father's choice, how differently she would have behaved! How anxious and capricious she would have been; and what a hard task the best of dress-makers would have found it to please her!

30th. We hear every day from Sir Percival. The last news is, that the alterations in his house will occupy from four to six months, before they can be properly completed. If painters, paper-hangers, and upholsterers could make happiness as well as splendour, I should be interested about their proceedings in Laura's future home. As it is, the only part of Sir Percival's last letter which does not leave me as it found me, perfectly indifferent to all his plans and projects, is the part which refers to the wedding tour. He proposes, as Laura is delicate, and as the winter threatens to be unusually severe, to take her to Rome, and to remain in Italy until the early part of next summer. If this plan should not be approved, he is equally ready, although he has no establishment of his own in town, to spend the season in London, in the most suitable furnished house that can be obtained for the purpose.

Putting myself and my own feelings entirely out of the question (which it is my duty to do, and which I have done), I, for one, have no doubt of the propriety of adopting the first of these proposals. In either case, a separation between Laura and me is inevitable. It will be a longer separation, in the event of their going abroad, than it would be in the event of their remaining in London—but we must set against this disadvantage, the benefit to Laura on the other side, of passing the winter in a mild climate; and, more than that, the immense assistance in raising her spirits, and reconciling her to her new existence, which the mere wonder and excitement of travelling for the first time in her life in the most interesting country in the world, must surely afford. She is not of a disposition to find resources in the conventional gaieties and excitements of London. They would only make the first oppression of this lamentable marriage fall the heavier on her. I dread the beginning of her new life more than words can tell; but I see some hope for her if she travels—none if she remains at home.

It is strange to look back at this latest entry in my journal, and to find that I am writing of the marriage and the parting with Laura, as people write of a settled thing. It seems so cold and so unfeeling to be looking at the future already in this cruelly composed way. But what other way is possible, now that the time is drawing so near? Before another month is over our heads, she will be *his* Laura instead of mine! *His* Laura! I am as little able to realise the idea which those two words convey—my mind feels almost as dulled and stunned by it, as if writing of her marriage were like writing of her death.

December 1st. A sad, sad day; a day that I

have no heart to describe at any length. After weakly putting it off, last night, I was obliged to speak to her this morning of Sir Percival's proposal about the wedding tour.

In the full conviction, that I should be with her, wherever she went, the poor child—for a child she is still in many things—was almost happy at the prospect of seeing the wonders of Florence and Rome and Naples. It nearly broke my heart to dispel her delusion, and to bring her face to face with the hard truth. I was obliged to tell her that no man tolerates a rival—not even a woman-rival—in his wife's affections, when he first marries, whatever he may do afterwards. I was obliged to warn her, that my chance of living with her permanently under her own roof, depended entirely on my not arousing Sir Percival's jealousy and distrust by standing between them at the beginning of their marriage, in the position of the chosen depository of his wife's closest secrets. Drop by drop, I poured the profaning bitterness of this world's wisdom into that pure heart and that innocent mind, while every higher and better feeling within me recoiled from my miserable task. It is over now. She has learnt her hard, her inevitable lesson. The simple illusions of her girlhood are gone; and my hand has stripped them off. Better mine than his—that is all my consolation—better mine than his.

So the first proposal is the proposal accepted. They are to go to Italy; and I am to arrange, with Sir Percival's permission, for meeting them and staying with them, when they return to England. In other words, I am to ask a personal favour, for the first time in my life, and to ask it of the man of all others to whom I least desire to owe a serious obligation of any kind. Well! I think I could do even more than that, for Laura's sake.

2nd. On looking back, I find myself always referring to Sir Percival in disparaging terms. In the turn affairs have now taken, I must and will root out my prejudice against him. I cannot think how it first got into my mind. It certainly never existed in former times.

Is it Laura's reluctance to become his wife that has set me against him? Have Hartright's perfectly intelligible prejudices infected me without my suspecting their influence? Does that letter of Anne Catherick's still leave a lurking distrust in my mind, in spite of Sir Percival's explanation, and of the proof in my possession of the truth of it? I cannot account for the state of my own feelings: the one thing I am certain of is, that it is my duty—doubly my duty, now—not to wrong Sir Percival by unjustly distrusting him. If it has got to be a habit with me always to write of him in the same unfavourable manner; I must and will break myself of this unworthy tendency, even though the effort should force me to close the pages of my journal till the marriage is over! I am seriously dissatisfied with myself—I will write no more to-day.

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December 16th. A whole fortnight has passed; and I have not once opened these pages. I have been long enough away from my journal, to come back to it, with a healthier and better mind, I hope, so far as Sir Percival is concerned.

There is not much to record of the past two weeks. The dresses are almost all finished; and the new travelling-trunks have been sent here from London. Poor dear Laura hardly leaves me for a moment, all day; and, last night, when neither of us could sleep, she came and crept into my bed to talk to me there. "I shall lose you so soon, Marian," she said; "I must make the most of you while I can."

They are to be married at Limmeridge Church; and, thank Heaven, not one of the neighbours is to be invited to the ceremony. The only visitor will be our old friend, Mr. Arnold, who is to come from Polesdean, to give Laura away; her uncle being far too delicate to trust himself outside the door in such inclement weather as we now have. If I were not determined, from this day forth, to see nothing but the bright side of our prospects, the melancholy absence of any male relative of Laura's, at the most important moment of her life, would make me very gloomy and very distrustful of the future. But I have done with gloom and distrust—that is to say, I have done with writing about either the one or the other in this journal.

Sir Percival is to arrive to-morrow. He offered, in case we wished to treat him on terms of rigid etiquette, to write and ask our clergyman to grant him the hospitality of the rectory, during the short period of his sojourn at Limmeridge before the marriage. Under the circumstances, neither Mr. Fairlie nor I thought it at all necessary for us to trouble ourselves about attending to trifling forms and ceremonies. In our wild moorland country, and in this great lonely house, we may well claim to be beyond the reach of the trivial conventionalities which hamper people in other places. I wrote to Sir Percival to thank him for his polite offer, and to beg that he would occupy his old rooms, just as usual, at Limmeridge House.

17th. He arrived to-day, looking, as I thought, a little worn and anxious, but still talking and laughing like a man in the best possible spirits. He brought with him some really beautiful presents, in jewellery, which Laura received with her best grace, and, outwardly at least, with perfect self-possession. The only sign I can detect of the struggle it must cost her to preserve appearances at this trying time, expresses itself in a sudden unwillingness, on her part, ever to be left alone. Instead of retreating to her own room, as usual, she seems to dread going there. When I went up-stairs to-day, after lunch, to put on my bonnet for a walk, she volunteered to join me; and, again, before dinner, she threw the door open between our two rooms, so that we might talk to each other while we were dressing. "Keep me always doing something," she said; "keep me always in company with somebody. Don't let

me think—that is all I ask now, Marian—don't let me think."

This sad change in her, only increases her attractions for Sir Percival. He interprets it, I can see, to his own advantage. There is a feverish flush in her cheeks, a feverish brightness in her eyes, which he welcomes as the return of her beauty and the recovery of her spirits. She talked to-day at dinner with a gaiety and carelessness so false, so shockingly out of her character, that I secretly longed to silence her and take her away. Sir Percival's delight and surprise appeared to be beyond all expression. The anxiety which I had noticed on his face when he arrived, totally disappeared from it; and he looked, even to my eyes, a good ten years younger than he really is.

There can be no doubt—though some strange perversity prevents me from seeing it myself—there can be no doubt that Laura's future husband is a very handsome man. Regular features form a personal advantage to begin with—and he has them. Bright brown eyes, either in man or woman, are a great attraction—and he has them. Even baldness when it is only baldness over the forehead (as in his case), is rather becoming, than not, in a man, for it heightens the head and adds to the intelligence of the face. Grace and ease of movement; perfect good breeding; ready, pliant, conversational powers—all these are unquestionable merits, and all these he certainly possesses. Surely, Mr. Gilmore, ignorant as he is of Laura's secret, was not to blame for feeling surprised that she should repent of her marriage engagement? Any one else in his place, would have shared our good old friend's opinion. If I were asked, at this moment, to say plainly what defects I have discovered in Sir Percival, I could only point out two. One, his incessant restlessness and excitability—which may be caused, naturally enough, by unusual energy of character. The other, his short, sharp, contemptuous manner of speaking to the servants—which may be only a bad habit, after all. No: I cannot dispute it, and I will not dispute it—Sir Percival is a very handsome and a very agreeable man. There! I have written it down, at last, and I am glad it's over.

18th. Feeling weary and depressed, this morning, I left Laura with Mrs. Vesey, and went out alone for one of my brisk mid-day walks, which I have discontinued too much of late. I took the dry airy road, over the moor, that leads to Todd's Corner. After having been out half an hour, I was excessively surprised to see Sir Percival approaching me from the direction of the farm. He was walking rapidly, swinging his stick; his head erect as usual, and his shooting jacket flying open in the wind. When we met, he did not wait for me to ask any questions—he told me, at once, that he had been to the farm to inquire if Mr. and Mrs. Todd had received any tidings, since his last visit to Limmeridge, of Anne Catherick.

"You found, of course, that they had heard nothing?" I said.



"Nothing whatever," he replied. "I begin to be seriously afraid that we have lost her. Do you happen to know," he continued, looking me in the face very attentively, "if the artist—Mr. Hartright—is in a position to give us any further information?"

"He has neither heard of her, nor seen her, since he left Cumberland," I answered.

"Very sad," said Sir Percival, speaking like a man who was disappointed, and yet, oddly enough, looking, at the same time, like a man who was relieved. "It is impossible to say what misfortunes may not have happened to the miserable creature. I am inexpressibly annoyed at the failure of all my efforts to restore her to the care and protection which she so urgently needs."

This time he really looked annoyed. I said a few sympathising words; and we then talked of other subjects, on our way back to the house. Surely, my chance meeting with him on the moor has disclosed another favourable trait in his character? Surely, it was singularly considerate and unselfish of him to think of Anne Catherick on the eve of his marriage, and to go all the way to Todd's Corner to make inquiries about her, when he might have passed the time so much more agreeably in Laura's society? Considering that he can only have acted from motives of pure charity, his conduct, under the circumstances, shows unusual good feeling, and deserves extraordinary praise. Well! I give him extraordinary praise—and there's an end of it.

19th. More discoveries in the inexhaustible mine of Sir Percival's virtues.

To-day, I approached the subject of my proposed sojourn under his wife's roof, when he brings her back to England. I had hardly dropped my first hint in this direction, before he caught me warmly by the hand, and said I had made the very offer to him, which he had been, on his side most anxious to make to me. I was the companion of all others whom he most sincerely longed to secure for his wife; and he begged me to believe that I had conferred a lasting favour on him by making the proposal to live with Laura after her marriage, exactly as I had always lived with her before it.

When I had thanked him, in her name and in mine, for his considerate kindness to both of us, we passed next to the subject of his wedding tour, and began to talk of the English society in Rome to which Laura was to be introduced. He ran over the names of several friends whom he expected to meet abroad this winter. They were all English, as well as I can remember, with one exception. The one exception was Count Fosco.

The mention of the Count's name, and the discovery that he and his wife are likely to meet the bride and bridegroom on the continent, puts Laura's marriage, for the first time, in a distinctly favourable light. It is likely to be the means of healing a family feud. Hitherto, Madame Fosco has chosen to forget her obliga-

tions as Laura's aunt, out of sheer spite against the late Mr. Fairlie for his conduct in the affair of the legacy. Now, however, she can persist in this course of conduct no longer. Sir Percival and Count Fosco are old and fast friends, and their wives will have no choice but to meet on civil terms. Madame Fosco, in her maiden days, was one of the most impertinent women I ever met with—capricious, exacting, and vain to the last degree of absurdity. If her husband has succeeded in bringing her to her senses, he deserves the gratitude of every member of the family—and he may have mine to begin with.

I am becoming anxious to know the Count. He is the most intimate friend of Laura's husband; and, in that capacity, he excites my strongest interest. Neither Laura nor I have ever seen him. All I know of him is that his accidental presence, years ago, on the steps of the Trinità del Monte at Rome, assisted Sir Percival's escape from robbery and assassination, at the critical moment when he was wounded in the hand, and might, the next instant, have been wounded in the heart. I remember also that, at the time of the late Mr. Fairlie's absurd objections to his sister's marriage, the Count wrote him a very temperate and sensible letter on the subject, which, I am ashamed to say, remained unanswered. This is all I know of Sir Percival's friend. I wonder if he will ever come to England? I wonder if I shall like him?

My pen is running away into mere speculation. Let me return to sober matter of fact. It is certain that Sir Percival's reception of my venturesome proposal to live with his wife, was more than kind, it was almost affectionate. I am sure Laura's husband will have no reason to complain of me, if I can only go on as I have begun. I have already declared him to be handsome, agreeable, full of good feeling towards the unfortunate, and full of affectionate kindness towards me. Really, I hardly know myself again, in my new character of Sir Percival's warmest friend.

20th. I hate Sir Percival! I flatly deny his good looks. I consider him to be eminently disagreeable, and totally wanting in kindness and good feeling. Last night, the cards for the married couple were sent home. Laura opened the packet, and saw her future name in print, for the first time. Sir Percival looked over her shoulder familiarly at the new card which had already transformed Miss Fairlie into Lady Glyde—smiled with the most odious self-complacency—and whispered something in her ear. I don't know what it was—Laura has refused to tell me—but I saw her face turn to such a deadly whiteness that I thought she would have fainted. He took no notice of the change: he seemed to be barbarously unconscious that he had said anything to pain her. All my old feelings of hostility towards him revived on the instant; and all the hours that have passed, since, have done nothing to dissipate them. I am more unreasonable and more unjust than

ever. In three words—how glibly my pen writes them!—in three words, I hate him.

21st. Have the anxieties of this anxious time shaken me a little, at last? I have been writing, for the last few days, in a tone of levity which, Heaven knows, is far enough from my heart, and which it has rather shocked me to discover on looking back at the entries in my journal.

Perhaps I may have caught the feverish excitement of Laura's spirits, for the last week. If so, the fit has already passed away from me, and has left me in a very strange state of mind. A persistent idea has been forcing itself on my attention, ever since last night, that something will yet happen to prevent the marriage. What has produced this singular fancy? Is it the indirect result of my apprehensions for Laura's future? Or has it been unconsciously suggested to me by the increasing restlessness and agitation which I have certainly observed in Sir Percival's manner, as the wedding-day draws nearer and nearer? Impossible to say. I know that I have the idea—surely the wildest idea, under the circumstances, that ever entered a woman's head—but try as I may, I cannot trace it back to its source.

22nd. Such a day of confusion and wretchedness as I hope never to see again.

Kind Mrs. Vesey, whom we have all too much overlooked and forgotten of late, innocently caused us a sad morning to begin with. She has been, for months past, secretly making a warm Shetland shawl for her dear pupil—a most beautiful and surprising piece of work to be done by a woman at her age and with her habits. The gift was presented this morning; and poor warm-hearted Laura completely broke down when the shawl was put proudly on her shoulders by the loving old friend and guardian of her motherless childhood. I was hardly allowed time to quiet them both, or even to dry my own eyes, when I was sent for by Mr. Fairlie, to be favoured by a long recital of his arrangements for the preservation of his own tranquillity on the wedding-day.

"Dear Laura" was to receive his present—a shabby ring, with her affectionate uncle's hair for an ornament, instead of a precious stone, and with a heartless French inscription, inside, about congenial sentiments and eternal friendship—"dear Laura" was to receive this tender tribute from my hands immediately, so that she might have plenty of time to recover from the agitation produced by the gift, before she appeared in Mr. Fairlie's presence. "Dear Laura" was to pay him a little visit that evening, and to be kind enough not to make a scene. "Dear Laura" was to pay him another little visit in her wedding dress, the next morning, and to be kind enough, again, not to make a scene. "Dear Laura" was to look in once more, for the third time, before going away, but without harrowing his feelings by saying *when* she was going away, and without tears—"in the

name of pity, in the name of everything, dear Marian, that is most affectionate and most domestic and most delightfully and charmingly self-composed, *without tears!*" I was so exasperated by this miserable selfish trifling, at such a time, that I should certainly have shocked Mr. Fairlie by some of the hardest and rudest truths he has ever heard in his life, if the arrival of Mr. Arnold from Polesdean had not called me away to new duties down stairs.

The rest of the day is indescribable. I believe no one in the house really knew how it passed. The confusion of small events, all huddled together one on the other, bewildered every one. There were dresses sent home, that had been forgotten; there were trunks to be packed and unpacked and packed again; there were presents from friends far and near, friends high and low. We were all needlessly hurried; all nervously expectant of the morrow. Sir Percival, especially, was too restless, now, to remain five minutes together in the same place. That short, sharp cough of his troubled him more than ever. He was in and out of the house all day long; and he seemed to grow so inquisitive, on a sudden, that he questioned the very strangers who came on small errands to the house. Add to all this, the one perpetual thought, in Laura's mind and mine, that we were to part the next day, and the haunting dread, unexpressed by either of us, and yet ever present to both, that this deplorable marriage might prove to be the one fatal error of her life and the one hopeless sorrow of mine. For the first time in all the years of our close and happy intercourse we almost avoided looking each other in the face; and we refrained, by common consent, from speaking together in private, through the whole evening. I can dwell on it no longer. Whatever future sorrows may be in store for me, I shall always look back on this twenty-second of December as the most comfortless and most miserable day of my life.

I am writing these lines in the solitude of my own room, long after midnight; having just come back from a stolen look at Laura in her pretty little white bed—the bed she has occupied since the days of her girlhood.

There she lay, unconscious that I was looking at her—quiet, more quiet than I had dared to hope, but not sleeping. The glimmer of the night-light showed me that her eyes were only partially closed: the traces of tears glistened between her eyelids. My little keepsake—only a brooch—lay on the table at her bedside, with her prayer-book, and the miniature portrait of her father which she takes with her wherever she goes. I waited a moment, looking at her from behind her pillow, as she lay beneath me, with one arm and hand resting white on the white coverlid, so still, so quietly breathing, that the frill on her night-dress never moved—I waited looking at her, as I have seen her thousands of times, as I shall never see her again—and then stole back to my room. My own love! with all your wealth, and all your beauty, how friendless you are! The one man who would give his

heart's life to serve you, is far away, tossing, this stormy night, on the awful sea. Who else is left to you? No father, no brother—no living creature but the helpless, useless woman who writes these sad lines, and watches by you for the morning, in sorrow that she cannot compose, in doubt that she cannot conquer. Oh, what a trust is to be placed in that man's hands to-morrow! If ever he forgets it; if ever he injures a hair of her head!—

THE TWENTY-THIRD OF DECEMBER. *Seven o'clock.* A wild unsettled morning. She has just risen—better and calmer, now that the time has come, than she was yesterday.

*Ten o'clock.* She is dressed. We have kissed each other; we have promised each other not to lose courage. I am away for a moment in my own room. In the whirl and confusion of my thoughts, I can detect that strange fancy of some hindrance happening to stop the marriage, still hanging about my mind. Is it hanging about *his* mind, too? I see him from the window, moving hither and thither uneasily among the carriages at the door.—How can I write such folly! The marriage is a certainty. In less than half an hour we start for the church.

*Eleven o'clock.* It is all over. They are married.

*Three o'clock.* They are gone! I am blind with crying—I can write no more—

#### EASTERN LUNACY, AND SOMETHING MORE.

THE Greek madhouse of Constantinople lies out far beyond the Seven Towers, and outside the walls. I went to it alone, with a letter of introduction to a Dr. Morano, a native of Salonica. I could get no information at first where the Greek madhouse lay, nor, indeed, did I even know that it was a Greek establishment that I was going to visit. All I knew was, that Dr. Morano presided over the Demir-Khan to which I was bound.

I asked and walked till I was footsore. Every one knew where it was, and showed me a different way. I went every way I was told, and nowhere found the Demir-Khan. I found myself in the old clothes bazaar, in the tent bazaar, in the street of the coppersmiths, among the pipe-makers, in the horse market, in a mosque court railed at by an old Turkish priest, on the Bosphorus in the cushioned cradle of a caique, in the valleys, on the hills, threading an aqueduct arch where fig-trees grew leafily out of the walls, in burial-grounds among cypresses, near barracks—but never at the madhouse.

At last, as I was resting to take some sherbet at a stall, almost worn out—my head feeling as dry and crusty with the heat as a well-baked quartern loaf—I saw in the distance a Turkish doctor whom I had met at a prison hospital, riding along, preceded by his pipe-bearer.

May your shadow never be less, and the hairs of your head never decrease. Demir-Khan? Why, miles away outside the wall, out by the Sea of Marmora, beyond the Seven Towers.

I thank him, hire a horse from one of those numerous rows of hacks that stand ready saddled in every public place of Constantinople, and push off, calling out "Demir-Khan?" inquiringly to every body I meet, be he pasha, or peach-seller, Turk, infidel, heretic, or heathen.

Miles through lonely suburb streets, rough-paved and shadowy, and I at last emerge, in full blaze of the broad sun, through a city gate into the open country beyond the Seven Towers, and strike far to the left, beyond all the long regions of leek gardens and melon beds, and the rows of samboas and cherry-trees that follow the triple line of ruined wall that girds the old city.

Here I get "warm," as children say, in a double sense. I am getting near the Greek Demir-Khan. I pass an Armenian convent overlooking the blue sea, and there alight to let my horse drink at a delicious fountain, sparkling, cold and pure. I trample down the wild gourds and other weeds to reach the edge of the cliff, and there, looking over to the beach beneath, see some Greek fishermen ankle deep in water, joining hand in hand, and dancing their national Romaika: not without shouts and splashing, they being in the spirits that dabbling in sea water without any clothes on seems always to produce.

I arrive at the gate of a huge enclosure, and, going in, pass up through a garden that seems all mulberry-trees and sunflowers. I am informed that the doctor is not at home, but that the superintendent, a little servile man in a brown holland pinafore, will be proud to do the honours.

He claps his hands, in the Arabian Nights manner, and instantly appears "to him" an agile Greek in white voluminous plaited kilt and black embroidered greaves, who bears in one hand a shovelful of hot charcoal upon which lazily smokes some incense, yielding a fat blue fume and a pungent ecclesiastical odour.

He precedes us for sanitary reasons, and leads us about the huge charity: first to the old men's ward, then to the school; from room to room, but not a word about the mad people. I believe, after all, I have got to the wrong place, for now the lean, dried up pedagogos makes the classes of coarse young Greeks go through various manœuvres to surprise the visitor. One young Anastase is held up to me as the object of special wonder, from his progress in acquiring Greek hymns, and for his power of singing them, which I am afraid he is going to do for my edification; but I am preserved.

I descend at last, and go down among the madmen, who scowl and gibber at me, pray at me, and curse me. The special sight of the place, as the turnkey thinks, is what I am at once taken to see, the smoking incense preceding me in a small pillar of cloud that sets the madmen whispering. It is a Greek sailor, chained down in a chair in a state of paroxysm, hands tied, feet tied, and a girdle round the waist; yet still he



contrives, as we enter, to swerve round to us, and, half raving, half crying, to roar at us, and tell us he is a Greek admiral kept there by the Turks—for "nothing—nothing—nothing!"

On pallets round, or on the stone floor by the grated windows, were other madmen, gibbering together.

As the poor bound, possessed man still kept writhing with his fetters, and tossing his poor distracted head backward and forward, now screaming and cursing, now whining and drivelling and crying, we thought it better to pass on to the women's ward. There, with the exception of the total want of bonnet making, or straw plaiting, or any of those humane and wise employments which women in Bedlam are occupied in, the scene much resembled that of any English lunatic asylum. There were certainly no long, airy corridors, clean as Dutch palaces; no pleasant, lofty windows; no sense of watchful, prudent care—of almost religious regularity and order. But, still, there was every decency preserved, and, for a Turkish or Greek establishment, it was neat and trim. Three of the female attendants were resting, in their own side rooms, on Turkish cushioned divans; the patients seemed tranquil and reasonably content. There was, as there always is in asylums, the woman who comes up smiling, then slyly tries to run a pin into your arm; there was the dramatic, talkative woman, with wrongs; there was the religious maniac, ever at prayer; there was the noisy, vain maniac, who all day ties bows and arranges her dress. The dramatic woman, standing up before me with long dishevelled hair and arms crossed, looked quite the Pythoness as she poured forth, in mellifluous Turkish, an endless stream of statement, which, for the mere babble of its music, I could have listened to for an hour.

As we passed out from the wards into the palisaded paddock, where the insane promenade, a little old woman followed us, whining as piteously as if she were being loaded with stripes. Nothing could appease her. I tried her with all the Turkish words of rank and title I could think of, to soothe her. I offered her money as she squatted down crying under a wall, and she threw it away, whining and fretting like a child put in a corner, at which all the turnkeys (who had a fine vein of humour that would turn a friend's suicide into a joke, and a mother's funeral into a source of sociable amusement) laughed till their red fez caps nearly dropped off, as if so "funny" a thing had not happened in their time. But when, as one of them cautiously unlocked the paled gate, and opened it scantily to let me pass, the old woman suddenly burst through, and scudded, crying and howling, among the huge golden sunflowers in the garden, like an old Eve regaining Paradise, they fairly laughed till their jacket buttons sprang open.

Last scene of all, was the madmen's evening service in the little Greek chapel attached to the asylum. There, the brutal-looking priest bowed, and sang through his nose. There, in stalls, as

in the choir of cathedrals, the maniacs sang also through their noses, and behaved quite as rationally as either priest or people at St. George's-in-the-East. There, among tinselled candlesticks, burning in bright noon—to help God's sun, I suppose—and among millinery flowers and dirty pink ribbons, each of them by turns went up to the screen, and kissed the tinselled barbarous pictures of the saints. My last remembrance of that asylum is a spicy wave of the chafing dish of incense as I leaped on my horse, and shook its bridle, which was strung with Turkish talismans, and of a parting howl from the windows, as I cantered off down the approach, between the great sunflowers with downcast faces.

I do not know how other people felt, on the quiet Sunday morning soon afterwards, in the English chapel at Pera; but I confess I felt like one of the early Christians worshipping by stealth in some hole or corner of Diocletian's Rome, during the heat of that monster's persecution. There was something sneaking in the tolerated way we crept to church, distrustful of turbans, and timidly avoiding the gay Greeks rollicking at the little round marble tables of their cafés on the terrace above the burial-ground. Toleration! And this is what the Crusaders' descendants have come to!

I paid peculiar attention that morning to the purified Church service, grand in its simplicity, because I and Rocket were going, after the sermon, to see the dancing dervishes at their convent chapel close by. The plain white robe barred with crimson scarf, the grave black gown, had to me that morning a new aspect. The prayers that children can understand, and the wisest of men cannot surpass, I was soon to compare with shouted sentences of Mahomet's poor rambling poem stuffed with garbled Scripture stories. I was going to see the sleeping tiger of Mohammedanism, rampant, bloodthirsty, and in the old attitude of dangerous rapacity and fierceness. I was going to see one of the most curious and wild sect of Mohammedan dissenters perform their magic rites. I had read of the shrieks and moanings of American camp meetings, of the groans and fits of Wesley's open air praying mobs, of the Flagellants of the Middle Ages, of the knavish Convulsionnaires of France, of the ravings of the Pythoness at Delphi, of the ecstatic visions of Swedenborg in Pentonville, but here I expected to see something peculiarly strange and un-European, something specially indicative that I was among men of a new race and a new faith. That the dervishes' rites were not ludicrous waltzing extravagances, as the pedant traveller generally describes them, I felt quite sure.

The Christian sermon over, I and Rocket moved straight for the dervishes' convent: about one o'clock being the usual time that their service commenced. After some zig-zagging, and much crawling up burning steep streets, and much hurrying down sloping alleys, being led and directed by Greeks north, south, east, and west,

we at last reached a small iron gate. Opening it, we were in a small enclosure, at the end of which a flight of stone steps led to the dervishes' chapel, the doors of which were open. Opposite the doors, were some outbuildings, where I could see dervishes putting on their dancing robes, and smilingly arranging their brown felt caps. Outside these cottage sheds was a great heap of earth, thrown up as if from an immense plague-pit, which it bethought me (the conspiracy still hanging over us) might have been dug with the best intentions, to receive the bodies of the murdered Christians of Pera, including your humble servant. In plain fact, however, I believe the enormous hole was merely intended for the vulgar purpose of a well.

On a little terrace by the door stood an old grey-bearded Turk, in a faded yellow flowered dressing-gown, and shuffling red slippers, whom, I felt convinced, I had met before somewhere in the Arabian Nights. He dangled in his wrinkled brown hand a string of tickets, which I found to be duplicates for the shoes left in his keeping at the entrance, for no one is allowed to enter a chapel or mosque but with bare feet. Till the time to begin, we sat on a second flight of steps, leading to a large wing of the convent, and bought luncheon of a cake merchant, who was there with his stand, talking to the American consul's cavass, whose silver-mounted pistols and gilt sabre gave him a sham state look, half fierce, half absurd. The cake was yellow and spongy, and beautifully clean and well made, as Turkish street food always is. We "put away," as Rocket called it, some ponderous slices, and by that time a hand clapping at the door, the cavass's signal, announced that we may enter.

We entered a square, flat-roofed room, the floor of which was covered with coarse straw-coloured matting. Little jelly glass oil lamps hung in circles from the ceiling. A low open work railing, with balustrades, shut in the centre enclosure where the dancing was to take place, to about the height of the altar rails in an English church. Round this we squatted, cross-legged—at least those of us who could bear that torture. All round the room ran a gallery, latticed like a dairy window, behind which birdcage trellising women were admitted, and in an open part of which, opposite the niche facing Mecca, sat the reader and the musicians, who, as soon as the sheikh entered, began to "play him in" with a soft breathing of "Lydian flutes," and a wild, monotonous hand-tapping of drums strained over earthen jars.

One by one the brotherhood came in, and, entering the low wicket, took their places in a circle round the balustrade, each first falling down, and touching the floor with his forehead, before the sacred niche, above which was a great painted legendary scutcheon, blue and gilt. One wore a girdled folding brown robe; another, a purple one; a third, a black; a fourth, a green; a fifth, a chocolate-coloured; but of all the thirty-four not one shone in crimson, blue, or yellow. A Quaker-like sobriety of colour

seemed the fashion of the sect; each had the brown flower-pot felt cap, and under it a white one; each wore under his coloured wrapper a white jacket, a white inner coat folded across the breast, short, loose white drawers, and a white petticoat reaching nearly to the ankles, with a weighted quilted border—to balance them, I suppose, in their mystical gyrations.

Just as I had gone through the faces of these fanatics, naming each man in my own mind, as a shepherd marks his sheep to connect them with some special mark of recognition—as one, "the Roman Nose;" another, "the Old Boy;" a third, "the Fat Negro;" a fourth, "the Young Soldier," and so on, the sheikh rose from his prostrations on the prayer-carpet, and, standing up in his tea-green robe, scarfed with black, a green turban bandaging round his felt cap, began to intone the Fatha, or initiatory prayer of the Moslems, as the low hissing reed flute and calabash drum grew now more uproarious and rejoicing than ever. The sheikh is a pale, ascetic looking man, with sunken yet penetrating eyes, and is evidently of a mental calibre infinitely higher than the greasy, cheating, sly-looking fanatics who surround him. In a moment his eye had passed round the motley group of soldiers, Syrians, Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Franks who sat with us outside the rails, and I could see his keen glances dissecting us; sifting the mere loungee from the observer, the mocker and sneerer from the votary; classing us all in a moment, and then withdrawing his mind back again into its own dim chapel of passionate, secret, and silent belief. His prayer was solemn and devout, as if it had come from a fourteenth century archbishop, his slow bendings, with pale hand upon his breast, were studies for a Spanish painter of Ribera's time. His voice was low and fervid, and beautifully modulated, a sweet look of resignation and suffering, as on the brow of a martyr passing to the fire, was upon his face. That man had the countenance of a king, but of a king turned monk. You might hunt all the convents of Europe through and not find so much intellect in a fanatic's face as was visible in that sheikh's.

All this time the breathing flute was not for a moment mute, hissing like a desert snake, stirring in the dry cane brake, soaring like a lark that springs to the sun with throbbing wings, so the music rose in whirs, as the incense mounts in curls; one, two, one, two, went the drum, never loud, yet never dumb; one, two, one, two, only throbbing, yet not dumb; one, two, two, one.

Still now and then a dervish adjusting his newly donned robe, or pressing down his felt helmet, joined the squatting circle; first kneeling in prayer, then rising and kissing the sheikh's hand before he took his place. One of these late comers greeted Roman Nose with a sly smile, such as a thimble-rig man greets his "bonnet," the plethoric grazier, with.

Round and round flew the sound of the flutes;

from underground throbbed the drum, never loud, but never dumb; round and round flew the sound, faster, faster, faster, faster, boding woe and dire disaster.

"At last they are going to begin," said Rocket, as the dervishes, brown, purple, black, and green, got in a row facing the niche and the big candles, and then bowing, suddenly fell on their knees, so exactly at the same moment that their horny knees thumped the polished floor as one man's knees; or at least, if there was a difference, it was no more difference than between the first and last note of a rouladed piano scale, fired off by the swiftest and most dexterous of Thalberg's hundred fingers. Thump, thump, went the sixty-eight knees in two rows, while the sheikh, with both hands crossed upon his breast, bent low upon his prayer-rug.

And even yet and all this time, like a solemn cadenced rhyme, breathed the hollow-reeded flute, very hushed, yet never mute, breaking out with wild surprises, whispers soft and wailing rises, and as if from underground, throbbed below the measured sound of the tight strained echoing drum, never loud, yet never dumb.

Deeper grew the mystery, deeper the expectation, as the Koran reader above in the gallery began the appointed chapters of Mahomet's fervid rhapsody, half ejaculation, half hymn, and the brotherhood commenced slowly pacing processional round the enclosure, past the sheikh, who gave them each his benediction.

But before this, each of the dervishes had peeled off his dressing-gown robe, untwisted his scarf-girdle, and handed both to an old brother who seemed to act as master of the ceremonies, and they appeared lithe and active, though differing in age and degrees of corpulence, from the mere stripling to the heavy twelve-stoner, already perspiring by mere anticipation. Now, crossing their arms on their breasts, placing the right hand on the left shoulder and the left hand on the right shoulder, they began to file past the sheikh, bowing as they passed him, then turning to bow to the next comer, who, in his turn, bowed too.

Now, the master of the ceremonies, having collected on his arm piles of cloaks, the barefooted men prepare for the dance by tucking one flap of their white jackets within the other, and stretching out their arms horizontally, the right hand pointing downwards and the left stretched upwards, as I supposed for balance and counterpoise, after the manner of boys sliding. Then, slowly pivoting round, one after the other, the dervishes began to get into motion, their naked feet performing skilfully a sort of waltzing step, which increased in speed as the music grew faster and faster.

The most astonishing part of the mystical circling dance was, that although the dozen or fourteen men twirled all round the enclosure, they never touched each other—no, not even the fringe of each other's garments.

And all this time the breathing flute, often hushed but never mute, danced in echo circling round, and, as if from underground, came the

murmur of the drum, very low but never dumb.

I do not know if I can convey a notion of the step, though I watched it carefully and was close to the performers. In all cases the left foot was kept quite even to the floor. The dervish dancer grinding round slowly on the pivot of his hard heel, at the same time passed his right foot over the instep of the stationary foot, swaying round his body with its spreading bell of a white skirt, the twisting screw-like folds of which gave it the appearance of the model of a chocolate-frother cut out in white paper; with outstretched hands, and swaying robe, and staring, rapt, or entranced eye, they seemed to me like so many brother magicians engaged in mystical planet worship. Not that the dervishes all wore the same aspect of stolid introspection. No. Roman Nose was going at it as if it was a matter of life or death, or a wager. I set him down as a fussy, simple-minded formalist. Old Boy was hot, but anxious. I supposed him to be a dupe. Stripling was conceited and showing off. Fat-and-Forty was spiteful and fanatical. Negro was calmly pleased and self-satisfied with the religious efficacy of the performance; and among them, stooping sometimes to escape contact with the whirling windmill band, paced the master of the ceremonies, to see that all was done according to ritual and precedent.

All this time the Indian flute, never hushed yet never mute, breathed a cadence to the drum, never loud yet never dumb.

But shall I forget the bystanders, so Oriental and characteristic, who shared stolidly with me, after their manner, my delight at this religious ballet? Was there not the Arab, his haid fastened round his head, with Syrian scarf striped red and brown and yellow, the fierce half-broken-in camel-driver, with his spear never out of his hand? Was there not that tall, handsome, patient Persian, with the black curly wool cap, shaped like the mouthpiece of a clarinet, who stood strongly forth from the white wall background, when everybody at the prayer turned their faces to the niche that pointed to Mecca? Were there not the English groom, who did not know what to make of it; the fat-headed, fierce, belaced cavass; and one or two Turkish soldiers, who dropped in as to a morning concert? Then above, in the women's gallery, there were spectators, I was sure, for I could see the lattices darken or brighten as the door admitting visitors shut or opened, and sometimes I thought I could see laughing bright eyes, raining "influence" on us. Below, too, through the open windows looking out upon a sort of vine-hung garden wall, Greek women looked in at the brotherhood, circling round and round with energy untiring, as the flutes and unseen drum grew more rapturous and soaring in the minor key than ever. But of all the spectators, those who interested me the most were a troop of reckless Turkish children that stood crowding and chattering in a sort of royal box that was raised on a platform higher than the area of the



dancers', and opposite to where I and Rocket squatted. There were two pretty sisters, trying to keep within bounds the caprice and restlessness of a lovely baby boy loosely dressed in a round brown skull-cap tied under the chin, and in a little flimsy suit of blue, pink, and yellow. Beautiful beyond even the ordinary beauty of Turkish children, this Puck raced in and out among the dancers, chattered to himself, clapped his fat little hands in royal approval, stared at the sheikh whose bland resigned melancholy nothing could shake, ran up and down to his seat, and behaved with intense disrespect to the Mahomedan dissenters whose rites he was witnessing. He was eventually borne off, a struggling Ganymede in the arms of young Scheherazade and her sister Dinarzade, treating the round world as if it were his football, and all the men in it as the toy inhabitants of his Noah's Ark.

All this time the deep-breathed flute, never hushed yet never mute, chased through wreaths of giddy cunning, the echoes fleet before it running, winding in and winding out, swift as dancer, lithe as scout, and below all throbbed the drum, ever low, but never dumb.

Yet, as Rocket observed, this strange dance was not altogether unintermittent; for, though the music in the gallery never ceased, occasionally the circlers slowly subsided into rest, and retired to their places, throwing on the cloaks handed them by the master of the ceremonies, and wiping the big hot drops that poured down their fired cheeks. Then again the music soared and whirled in its mimic whirlpool, and as if driven by the Eumenides, or inflamed by the fury of some old Arabian incantation, the votaries again pivoted off into the spherical dance, with the same half-shut eyes, floating hands, and rapt, concentrated stare at an ideal vacuity.

Then there was more kneeling, more stripping off gowns, more defiling past the sheikhs, more Mamamouchi bowing to each other. Then a sliding into the dance, and, da capo, the rhapsody and ecstasy of the old Sabæan planet worship. Again the white gowns swerved out into moving pyramids, again the bare feet tumbled over each other, again the T-like hands swayed round rapturously, like those of so many ballet-masters gone stark distraught on the religious road to the great cracked house of madness.

Now the music, by breaths and to-whooos and throbs and groans, died away, and as if they expected it, and were not sorry of the summons, the brothers threw on their gowns, and finally resumed their places. A reader, leaning against a gallery pillar, with his grave face turned to Mecca, and his head thrown back, dwelling on one minor note, and seldom wandering far up or down, droned out his dole of the Koran. A few more prayers, one deep and solemn one in a low voice full of feeling from the sheikh, more gamut thumps of the knees, and the dervishes, resuming their Bluchers (sic) at the door, quitted the chapel.

That day at Misseri's ponderous hotel dinner, as the herd of visitors were running through the

usual travellers' common-places about the dervish dances being "absurd," "ridiculous," "childish," Windybank, the oldest inhabitant of the hotel, a gentleman engaged in raising a small capital of nine millions for the Grand Central Chimborazo Railway, pompously enlightened our feeble capacities by telling us that the dervish dances were of deep significance, and were intended to represent the motions of the spheres, and their cadenced revolutions in measured orbits round the sun, who was represented by the sheikh.

The howling dervishes have their habitation across the Bosphorus, over in Scutari, and there one Friday I went to see them. I could scarcely find the little shed of a chapel again; but I knew it was somewhere high up on the slope of a street leading out of the miles of dark cypress groves that watch the great Turkish cemetery on that Asian side of the Sick Man's empire. We met nothing in the street but a running funeral, and an insolent fat pasha preceded by the usual chiboukdars, carrying his amber-mouthed pipes in long black cases, such as fishing-rods are put in.

At the porch of the cottage-like chapel, where a crowd of barelegged Turks idled as English villagers do round a public-house door when a fiddle is going, we took off our shoes: a process that always leads to much grumbling on the part of misguided Franks: and passed up a staircase to a gallery above, where white sheepskins and mats, not unfrequented by dervish fleas, were strewn for us by doorkeepers, not unmindful of backsheesh. Below, outside the balustrade at the mihrab (altar) end of the little chapel, were Turkish peasants and children, very reverent and credulous, as it appeared to me, in their quiet, grave, immovable way. In the chapel there was a trophy of faded banners, maces, daggers, spears, and huge steel halberds, inlaid with brass drums, cymbals, ferocious-looking hooks, and regimental spoons, such as the Janissaries once carried as their palladia; these, I believe, were once borne in foreign wars by raving dervish preachers, who long since had death's silencing hand clapped on their raving mouths. Even now I have heard that these dervishes appear sometimes in the market-places, at special moments of enthusiasm, brandishing these terrible and gigantic weapons, to the infinite danger of all true and untrue believers.

On the sheikh—an old feeble man, with yet a certain power and calibre about him—entering the chapel, after all the dervishes had kissed his hand, the service began with a nasal intonation of the Fatha, as a stifling thick smoke from the gilt brass censers began to rise, and prepare to enslave the senses by stifling those watchmen of the mind, so the better to depose and debase the reason. Some religious use incense, as farmers do sulphur for bees—to confuse the senses and so steal the honey of the mind.

There was something maniacal even in the deep ejaculations of "O mediator!" "O beloved!"

"O physician of souls!" "O thou who wert chosen!" "O advocate in the Day of Judgment, when men will exclaim, 'O my soul! O my soul!' and when thou wilt say, 'O my people! O my people!'" Then, as the sheikh prostrated himself on his white lambskin prayer-rug, the readers began chanting their ejaculations:

"Blessings on our prophet, the lord of messengers, and on his family and companions!"

"Blessings on Abraham and his companions," &c.

It is not my disposition to see the ludicrous if the ludicrous is not in a thing, but I must confess I had to bite my tongue hard when three old men, too feeble for howling, squatted on the floor—a blind feeble man, a yellow phlegmatic man, and a toothless old man, who, in England, would have been admirals at least—to whine verses of the Koran at the very top of their quavering voices. All this time the incense stilled, curdling blue and thick, while the sheikh in the green and black turban bowed to the niche, or raised his hands in prayer, as the dervishes put on their light-brown thick felt caps, and, taking off their girdles, hung them round their necks.

It was when the flutes began in a whirling, shuttling movement, singularly adapted to fill madhouses with lively tenants, that the real business of the afternoon (half-past three) commenced. The progress of the howling dervishes' chorus chant, and of the motions and gestures accompanying it, are always the same; beginning sanely and rationally enough, and gradually crescendoing to the wildest frenzy and the raving howl of mad wild beasts.

Ranged in a line like a row of soldiers on drill, the brothers first repeat slowly and sanely, in good cadence, keeping time with the flutes, the Mohammedan confession of faith: "La illah—illah la" (six syllables). As they say "la," all the dozen brothers bow forward; at "il," they raise themselves up again; at "lah," they bend backward; at "il," they again bend forward; at "lah," they raise themselves; at "la," they bend again backward.

The second time the syllables are repeated with a change of action; for now the men bend to the right at the first, raise themselves up at the second syllable, and bend to the left at the third. Soon the measure gets quicker, the music more whirling and frenzied, the gestures become abbreviated, or are performed and shouted so quickly that they seem like one and the same movement and one and the same sound, and all this time that nodding, toothless, bleary-eyed old chorus go quavering out the passages from the Borda, or praises of the Prophet, and the great dervish sheikhs, Abdul-Kadir, Gilan, and the founder, Seid Ahmed Rufai, and then they all clap their horny hands and shout in gasps, "Ya-hu!" (Jehovah), or "Ja meded!" (O help). Faster and louder goes the "la illah, illah la," faster the swaying backward, forward, and right and left, till you hear at last nothing but the first syllable "il," and the last "la," or a paviour's grunt of "Hoo!" roared out as if the madmen were turning into wolves rapidly; the motion growing quite mechanical and in-

sanely epileptic. There is a negro there with puffy ashy lips; a soldier, whose eyes stare very wildly; a greasy boy, who seems to think the whole affair a trick; a gross sailor-like man, well dressed, who came late, and who performs a sort of *chassé* step, and is undoubtedly a cheat and impostor; and a rickety idiot beggar, who is more demoniacal and frantic than any of the rest, and seems never to tire, though I see a cold marbly sweat beading upon his rough blue chin. Lastly, they keep three-quarter time, till faster or slower grows the orgie. I begin soon to observe that when the motion is backward and forward the scanning of their verse is thus:

La-il-lah—il-lah-lah;

but when to right and left it runs:

La-il-lah—il-lah-lah;

upon which the toothless old chorister, hearing the sheikh stamp as a sign for "taking" the thing quicker, nearly splits my ears with his execratic sacred song, which makes him writhe and roll his eyes with sheer anxiety and exertion; for, being deaf, our old friend is utterly incapable of knowing how exceedingly high he is pitching his thready old voice.

Every now and then, as I felt my brain slightly going with the monotonous paviour's howl, from some fourteen men nearly frenzied with religious and sympathetic excitement, I rolled myself back on my rug and took a draught of pure unincensed air from the open window that looked out on some cypress-trees, on a Turkish cottage, and on a little garden where a woolly-leaved mulberry grew to feed somebody's silkworms, and where a huge box-tree watched over the grave of some dervish long ceased from howling—quite tired out, I should think.

What a change to look back on that chain of men, tossing their heads in cadence to and fro, jerking forward and backward their mad bodies, and then coming down all together with the roaring "Hoo!" intermingled with shouts of "Allah!" "Alhamdoo lillah!" It would have been something at once ludicrous and dreadful to see the possessed man—the little idiotic beggar, wagging about like a machine—had not a smile of semi-formalist satisfaction sat on his face, such as no automaton could assume. Right, left, backward, forward, regular as a pendulum, his little legs bandied as if by perpetual oscillation. Thrust a bit of opium in that man's mouth, thought I, tie a sabre in his idiotic hand, craze him with half an hour of this howling, turn a little stupefying incense under his nose, and he would rush out and slay a dozen Christians, or brain the Sultan himself, if the sheikh bade him. His madness, I noticed, made the others madder; for, when any backslider slackened at all, a howl or roar of this idiot set him on again wilder than ever. In fact, a sort of juryman consultation, nodding right and left, was much in vogue among these candidates for Bedlam.

Mad and frenzied as this howling chorus of maniacs was, not one swooned or fell foaming at

the mouth, or subsided into fits, or otherwise—as often happens—misconducted himself.

There was a time (oh that wonderful twenty years ago!), says Mr. Brunswick Senex the great Eastern traveller, when these holy but singular men used to perform a complete series of juggling tricks—miracles to astonish credulous Frank travellers, or silly female votaries hidden behind the gallery lattices. They would hold red-hot iron in their mouths, carry balls of fire, handle burning hooks, and do other wonders, once popular among mediæval saints, and still so at English country fairs.

The miracles I saw were of a dubious kind. The old sheikh touched bad eyes that were brought to him: touched them beyond a doubt, but, for all I know, made them only worse. He pressed palsied hands, too, but, for all I saw, he left them palsied as his own. Then, roused to greater enthusiasm by these bold assertions to sainthood, enthusiastic, perhaps prepaid, parents pushed forward with baby children—mere coloured bundles of drapery—and laid them down side by side, in rows, before the white prayer-rug of the old sheikh. The children threw themselves down willingly, as with prepaid alacrity the fathers and dervish assistants rolled them together just as Punch rolls his row of victims when he is at the crowning acme of his murderous and despotic career. Then the old man in the yellow boots, his arms held on either side by stronger disciples, stepped, leisurely on each child, pressing him from head to foot with what he affected to be his whole weight, but which was only his whole weight minus the two large side slices of it held up by his supporters. Then, as a bigger boy, some twelve years old, laid himself low, the old sheikh walked down the row of bodies laid with their faces to the ground, and so miraculously harmless was that old man's weight, that I vow, on my honour as a traveller, I saw a baby boy look up and smile as the yellow boot passed over him. All the children rose as unhurt as if the old man had been only a sparrow that had hopped over them.

I had got to that pitch now, that I think, if that old idiot's head had rolled off and proved to be a brittle pumpkin; if that old sheikh had turned into a rat and run down a hole in the wainscot; or if all the brotherhood had suddenly been transformed into a row of howling jackals that had suddenly torn at us and driven us a whirlwind of beasts and Turks down the steep street, I should have treated the whole transaction quite as a matter of course.

The refrain and its effects on the mind are well known to us, but the effect of monotony and repetition generally, as used by some religious sects and false faiths to obtain spiritual influence over the mind, has not, I think, been duly considered by psychologists. I can only say for myself, that that mechanical swing of the body of some dozen and odd dervishes, that ways of that head, the measured dancing step,

and, to crown all, that cadenced howl at regular intervals, even as clock beats, did anything but steady my reason for the time being.

#### ONE TRACE LEFT.

THEY dragged it through the miry street,  
The trunk of a fallen tree;  
And on its bark the drizzling sleet  
Fell damp and chillingly.

Far from its native spot 'twas borne,  
Far from its leafy wood;  
And sister trees were left to mourn  
The gap where once it stood.

It brought a memory of the dale  
When summer days were nigh,  
And breezes wafted from the vale,  
The violet's perfumed sigh;

Of summer nights, that stealing down  
As softly as the dew,  
Left on the hills a misty crown,  
And darkened Heaven's blue.

But now, instead of woodland hush,  
Or woodland zephyrs sweet,  
It dragged through falling sleet and slush  
Along the miry street.

I thought, Is there no relic left,  
To tell its bygone pride?  
Have all its boughs been rudely reft?  
Has every leaflet died?

I looked, and saw that round the tree,  
With tendrils fresh and green,  
The ivy lingered lovingly,  
To tell of what had been.

This remnant of its beauty yet  
Clung fond and constant there,  
To bid me not in haste forget  
The wreck had once been fair.

And thus I thought the human heart,  
Degraded though it be,  
Retaineth still some lovely part,  
Like this poor fallen tree.

Dragged through the world's rough miry ways,  
Despised and scorned by all,  
Mementoes of its brighter days  
Will linger in its fall.

The beauty that its Maker gave,  
The feelings pure and high,  
Can only perish in the grave,  
And die when it shall die!

'Tis there, in some lone hidden spot,  
Which we pass by in haste:  
Each heart hath one forget-me-not,  
Amid its dreary waste.

However rough, and rude, and dark,  
That human breast may be,  
Some beauty clingeth to its bark,  
Like ivy to the tree.

#### THE BRITISH MERCHANT IN TROUBLE.

It is distressing to find certain British productions falling into contempt. The British lion must be admitted to be left to us, but there is no saying what even he might prove, if divested of his terrible skin. Has he any bones? Does he possess any blood and muscle? Or is he merely stuffed with mouldy hay?

There is the British wine—our own juice of



our own—vegetables,—what cup has ever been filled high with it in delirious delight? what Anacreon has ever ventured to sing its praise? The Samian wine, a liquor almost as medicinal as the Harrogate waters, has been immortalised in glowing verse; but Britannia's vintage is nowhere on the roll of fame. The most patriotic of our convivial countrymen decline to rally round it; and they drink destruction to the perfidious foreigner in the generous fluid which that foreigner makes and sells.

There is, or rather was, the British Bank, the Royal British Bank. Its very name should have been a guarantee for millions sterling. It ought to have existed for ages, and its solid roots should have struck as deeply into the earth as Stonehenge or the peak of Teneriffe. What was the fact? It withered in a night; it fell, a crumbling mass of paper and dust; and those who dug in the ruins found nothing but a few well-thumbed prayer-books, and some worthless mining shares in the bottomless pit.

These humiliations of the British name, it seems, are not sufficient, so the British merchant must strive to add another to the list. He has succeeded to a marvel. He has been accused, before now, of systematically defrauding his creditors, but he was preying upon his debtors, all the while, in a twofold degree. He is double-edged, and cuts in both ways. He has gathered with his right hand and with his left. The traditional cunning of the Hebrew, the reputed mendacity of the Greek, he unites and outdoes. So bold and unscrupulous has he been, and so notorious has he become, that a society has, at last, been founded to improve his morals, and lead him back into the right path. The mission of the ragged school, combined with the functions of the public prosecutor, have been transferred to certain self-appointed guardians of trade, and the result is the formation of a society called the "Association for Suppressing the Practice of Falsely Labelling Goods for Sale." An influential committee has been appointed, consisting of manufacturers and traders from the principal manufacturing districts and the most respectable wholesale houses in London, and certain rules have been adopted to help in converting the British merchant from some of his evil ways. They wish to prevent him from committing open, registered frauds—from selling one hundred yards of thread, for example, and labelling them as two hundred—and yet they find a difficulty in attempting even this. Several commercial associations, upon being applied to for assistance, have declared that the subject "could not be entertained." Numerous influential traders openly avow their determination to discourage the whole scheme, and hundreds of shippers of goods insist that the false labels shall be continued to suit the wishes of foreign importers. The existing law, it appears, if set in motion, is sufficient to reach the offenders; but the association is very anxious to work only with moral forces. They will endeavour to convert the British merchant by dissuasion and remonstrance,

and only in cases of positive necessity will they resort to prosecutions. The mission they have taken upon themselves is so simple, their demands are so moderate, and so little calculated to stir up the muddy depths of trading immorality and selfishness, that their opponents ought to feel how their true interest must lie in at once allowing them to succeed. A little virtue and a little preaching, if taken favourably at the outset, will often prevent the moralist and preacher from administering a stronger dose.

First of all, then, the British merchant is required by this very reasonable and almost timid association, to return to his disconsolate and neglected arithmetical tables; and to throw off, at once, and for ever, those dangerous but profitable heresies with regard to quantities which lead him to label everything with highly fanciful exaggerated weights and numbers. The British merchant has been found guilty of selling pieces of calico, nominally thirty-six yards in length, never measuring more than thirty yards. He is found guilty of selling thirty-six inches of silk lace, and calling it fifty-four inches; of selling grosses of tapes containing only sixty yards, as if they represented the full quantity of one hundred and forty-four yards. He is found guilty, in selling French cotton braid, of so far tampering with certain numbers that are expected to record the widths of the article, that five is turned into seven, seven into nine, and nine into eleven. He is found guilty, in making up fringes upon cards, of putting a width of two inches where it will meet the eye of the buyer, and a width of one inch all through the bulk that is out of sight. He is found guilty of increasing the weight of the hogshead, compared with the sugar which it contains, from twelve per cent. of the gross weight, to seventeen per cent. He is found guilty of pirating designs, of imitating the wrappers of well-known makers, and of forging popular trade marks. He is found guilty of selling ribbons in long lengths, the first three yards of which (being the part usually unrolled) are of a quality infinitely superior to the bulk of the piece. He is found guilty of reducing the weight of candles (sold in bunches) until the buyer is defrauded of two ounces in his pound. He is found guilty of mixing cotton with silk, and adulterating webbing; of mixing cotton with wool, and adulterating cloth. In proportion as this adulteration increases, the labels become more prominent in asserting the purity of the articles; and "All Wool" or "All Silk" are printed in the largest of golden letters, on the purest of cream-coloured cards. He is found guilty of putting false fancy lengths upon costly linens and cambrics, and false fancy quantities upon costly packets of buttons, &c., because these articles are generally made up for sale in such a purposely artistic manner, that it would spoil their appearance to subject them to the measuring test. These frauds are all considered, by those who practise and grow rich on them, as allowable customs of the trade. The British mer-

chants of all grades combine to prey upon the consumer, who is the only sufferer in the end. The poor sempstress, about whom so much wordy philanthropy has been talked by these very gentlemen, is, perhaps, their most melancholy victim. She buys the thread that snaps in her hand, and those delusive reels which contain a very small allowance of cotton to a very large allowance of wood.

For all this, and much more of the same kind, the British merchant is not to be put in a newly created pillory, or confined in a degrading prison. His wealth, his social importance, his external respectability, are to save him from this punishment, and he is only to be gently remonstrated with.

The association for improving his morals will lead him back to the innocent days of his childhood when he stood up with his hands behind him, and had the great truths of Cocker or Wakinghame instilled into his unsophisticated mind. He will be asked to place his hand upon his heart, and say if he has always acted as if sixteen drachms were an ounce; sixteen ounces, one pound; twenty-eight pounds, one quarter; four quarters, one hundred-weight; and twenty hundred-weight, one ton? He will be questioned as to how far he has observed the immutable canons of wool weight; and whether he has always given seven pounds to the clove; two cloves to the stone; two stone to the tod; six and a half tods to the wey; two weys to the sack, and twelve sacks to the last? He will be catechised upon his observance of the strict rules of dry measure; wine measure; and ale and beer measure. He will be closely examined upon his adherence to the cloth and yarn measures; and it is here expected that the stubborn sinner will melt, and admit that he has always remembered the quantities obliquely, giving only two and a quarter inches (instead of nine) to the quarter; four nails (instead of sixteen) to the yard; one hundred and twenty threads (instead of two hundred and forty) to the bur, and six burs (instead of twenty-four) to the spindle. At this favourable point in his anticipated conversion he will be asked the usual questions explanatory of the arithmetical tables, and his answers are expected to be something like the following:

Association for reforming the British Merchant.—For what purpose is Troy weight used?

Repentant British Merchant.—What, indeed?

Association, &c.—For what purpose is Avoirdupois weight used?

Repentant B. M. (with visible emotion).—Ah, dear-a-deary me!

Association, &c. (with emphasis).—For what purpose do you use the yard, the English ell, and the Flemish ell?

Repentant B. M. (after a flood of tears).—For the basest of purposes. Spare me, good gentlemen; I cannot—I cannot, indeed!

Association, &c.—What is the use of long measure?

Repentant B. M. (excitedly).—There's no such thing. It's short measure. It's always short. (Sensation.)

Association, &c. (severely).—What is the use of dry measure?—of any measure?

Repentant B. M. (hysterically).—Ha, ha! Very true. What a question! Oh dear!

At this stage the "unfortunate man," the "wretched creature"—or whatever, in the language of the ragged schools, the association think proper to term him—is expected to faint (or walk) away, and the examination will be adjourned in confusion and haste.

This practice of falsely labelling goods for sale is not to be handled with kid gloves. No practical man on the committee can believe in the mere force of dissuasion or remonstrance. If the law be declared sufficient to reach offenders, the law assuredly must be put in motion. Supposing that, in one way or another, the labours of the society are crowned with full success, will they have done more than have cured a superficial sore, while the blood of the system is still left in unwholesome impurity? The seven yard reel may be raised to seven yards, and many other quantities in weights and measures may be called by their right names, but clever falsehood in business circles will still command its position and rewards, and scrupulous honesty—on the losing side—be left to go to the wall. Colossal palaces of merchandise with a thousand windows, will still tower over the meaner house-tops, will still be nothing more than the busy hives where capital is stored to yield the greatest possible per-centage, by men who only attend about twelve times a year, to be presented with trading results. These palaces of trade—unscrupulous, profitable trade—will still be divided into a hundred departments, under a hundred separate managers or partners, whose only interest is to return the largest amount of profit on the capital entrusted to them at the beginning of the year. To buy, by any means, in the cheapest market, and to sell, by any means, in the dearest market, is all they have to do, to secure themselves money, independence, and even respect. The fraudulent bankrupt, who contemplates a midnight transformation of his stock-in-trade into a certain sum of portable cash, without the annoyance of being asked any troublesome questions, is never at a loss to find a ready midnight buyer in the person of one of these departmental chiefs. The tottering debtor, who has obtained an extensive credit in one of these departments, has only to hint his difficulties to the energetic manager, to be at once sustained with such glowing "references," that his liabilities will soon be transferred into the account-books of a rival firm. While the second creditor suffers, the first creditor gets paid, and this, in some City circles, is mildly spoken of as "getting out." The banker, who writes upon purity of banking, will gather in bills for discount bearing the most leprous names, providing there is one name, either on the front or the back, that is reputed to be a solvent guarantee. He cares little what rotten, speculative trading may be fostered by the

facilities he affords; he is not in business as the preserver of mercantile morality, and has only to make his profits in the usual average way. He has little more than an affected horror even of forged documents, until they are left unpaid in his cash-box, and then he is loud in his abuse of the edged tools, in playing with which he has cut his hands. He has been taught to conceal so much, from motives of prudence, that he has lost the relish for straightforward truth, and when truth presents itself to him, he regards it only as another imposition of a novel and elaborate kind.

These are only some of the deeper vices of our present commercial system, which the association before mentioned has no ambition to attack. The committee have doubtless formed a modest and accurate estimate of their own strength. Being drawn from the class whose disreputable members they are trying to reform, they start with no ignorance of the nature of their work. Our good wishes go with them. If they fail—as they possibly may—the disgrace will fall on the British merchant; while, if victorious, they may pave the way for bolder missionaries, who will endeavour yet further to purify the morals of trade.

#### VITTORIA ACCORAMBONI.

A TRUE ITALIAN HISTORY. IN NINE CHAPTERS.

##### CHAPTER V. LEAST SAID, SOONEST MENDED.

NOT a cardinal in all Rome was more scrupulously punctual in his attendance at all consistorial and other meetings than the old and infirm Cardinal di Montalto. He was noted for being almost always the first, or among the first, to enter the hall of meeting. But it was universally thought that on this occasion he would absent himself from the unluckily inopportune assembly. His much-loved nephew, the prop of his old age, the hope of his ambition, who alone could have made the triple crown, in any worldly point of view, worth having to him, was lying a yet unburied mangled corpse in the house of mourning he must leave to attend the conference. He must quit his desolate sister in her sorrow, and leave alone with the dead the weeping women whom his presence and authority alone had restrained from abandoning themselves to all the excesses of hysterical emotion. But it was not so much the painful effort necessary for tearing himself from this sad scene to present himself in his place at the Consistory, that led people to whisper to each other that old Montalto would never be able to be at that day's meeting; it was the thought that surely, under such circumstances, he would not venture to meet the prying eyes of the public, and especially of his peers of the Sacred College. Human infirmity, it was thought, could hardly in such a case attain to that perfect suppression of all emotion, that impassible and inscrutable demeanour of features, voice, and manner, which it was, as a matter of course, considered that policy and prudence in such a case demanded. What was it the old man had

to conceal? Was he not to be supposed to grieve over his nephew's untimely death? He was to conceal *everything* he felt on *any* subject. It was the traditional rule of conduct so universal, received from generation to generation, as to have become instinctive in the Roman nature. *Something* might gleam out from the inner hidden soul of the man in the weak moment of deep affliction; *some* feeling which might be made the basis of carefully reasoned theories as to the inscrutable old man's real thoughts and desires! We are told of profound comparative anatomists, who, from the sight of the small fragment of an antediluvian fossil skeleton, can determine the structure of the entire organisation. And the cunning moral anatomists of Rome ask only a momentary flash of real emotion to construct from it a whole theory of probable human character and intentions. This was the ordeal to which it was thought that the heavily stricken Cardinal di Montalto would not venture to expose himself.

All Rome was wrong. Punctual at the appointed hour, with bent body and tottering step, as usual, but not one iota more so than usual, and with his wonted calmly benignant but wholly impassible expression of features, the old man walked, one of the first to arrive, as ever, into the hall of meeting.

Of course every eye was on him, striving in vain to penetrate below that unruffled surface to the tumultuous movements which they thought must needs be raging beneath it. Then, one after another, their eminences advanced to condole with him on his misfortune. Just as in an exhibition of animal magnetism, the spectators attempt to satisfy themselves of the genuineness of the patient's insensibility by poking, pricking, and pinching him in every sensitive part, so the curious witnesses of this exhibition of stoicism proceeded to test the perfection of it by the closest scrutiny of the performer under the scalpel of their compassion and sympathy. But, to the admiration of all present, no shadow of failing under the ordeal rewarded the vigilance of the observers. With affectionate thanks to each for their kind sympathy, the old man replied to one, that in this world such misfortunes must be looked for, that history was full of such; to another, that excessive grief for the irremediable was but blamable weakness; and reminded a third that David, the man after God's own heart, had arisen and washed his face when his child was finally taken from him.

The most accomplished and practised members of the court, writes an historian, attributed this immobility of his to an affectation of the stoic courage of Brutus and Cato; but the wise judged that "without true Christian virtue it was impossible to feign to such perfection!" So that the capacity for dissimulation, so much admired by Rome, was actually erected by it into "a Christian virtue!"

When Gregory, the octogenarian pope, entered the Consistory, "the first thing he did," says the chronicler, "was to fix his eyes on the Cardinal di Montalto, and burst into tears."



But Peretti remained to all appearance unmoved. And when it came to his turn to approach the Pope for the transaction of business connected with the offices he held, and the Pope, again giving way to tears, consoled with him, and promised him that every effort should be made to discover the murderers, and bring them to condign punishment, the cardinal, humbly thanking his holiness for his sympathy, besought him to make no further inquiry into the matter, lest many who were innocent might be made miserable by another's crime. For his own part, he assured the Pope, that, from the bottom of his heart, he pardoned whosoever had done the deed. And, thus saying, he passed on to speak, with imperturbable calm, of the ordinary business in hand.

It is curious to observe in all this the total ignorance manifested by all parties concerned, and by the historians who narrate the facts, of the most elementary notions of the duties and functions of civil government.

The Pope, we are told, expressed the utmost astonishment, on quitting the Consistory, at the Cardinal di Montalto's admirable self-possession; and, in talking to his nephew, the Cardinal di San Sisto, said, shaking his head, "Truly that man is a great friar!"

But the poor cardinal had to undergo yet another severe ordeal. Roman etiquette required that all the great personages of the city, lay as well as ecclesiastic, should severally visit him to condole with him on his loss. Among the rest Prince Orsini would, of course, have to discharge this ceremonial obligation. Information had been carefully obtained when this trying visit was to be paid, and at the time named for it the receiving-room and ante-chamber of the cardinal were filled to overflowing with prelates and others, who, on one pretence or another, had gone thither, "every one of them," says the historian, "with the deliberate purpose of minutely observing the first meeting of those two faces, judging that the cardinal would scarcely succeed in hiding, at least at the first moment of meeting, some slight alteration of countenance." But the reverend and illustrious concourse of spies were disappointed; for Montalto received the prince with his usual suavity of manner and cheerful countenance, and discoursed with him on indifferent subjects as he had often done before. So that Orsini, on leaving him, "said laughingly to his companions, as he got into his carriage, 'Faith, it is true enough that the old fellow is a very great friar!'"

It is worth observing that these reiterated testimonies to the old cardinal's consummate mastery of the art of dissimulation are triumphantly related by his biographer, a monk of his own order, as bright gems in the coronet of virtues with which he crowns his hero. And he assures us, moreover, that the circumstances of this tragic affair, which in less masterly hands might easily have turned to the considerable injury of his chances of the papacy, were, by his consummate skill, so managed as to materially

strengthen them. "For," said the cardinals to themselves, "evidently this man, either by nature can not, or from policy will not, do injury to any one, however grievously he may be offended."

In the mean time his liberal conduct to Vittoria also won him golden opinions in all quarters. The young widow had to return to her father's house, and might have been sent back as empty-handed as she had come from it. But Montalto made her a present of all the gold and silver plate, the costly dresses and jewels which he and her late husband had purchased for her.

While Rome was still admiring this liberality, and within a very few days after the murder, the attention of the city was excited, and the feelings of the cardinal outraged anew by the news that Vittoria and her mother had left their home, and sought shelter in the palace of Prince Orsini. The gross indecency and audacity of such a step seems irreconcilable with any other supposition, than that they were both guilty accomplices in the murder of Peretti. It was said that they sought in the palace of Orsini, which was inviolable by the police, an asylum from any pursuits which might be directed against them on account of Peretti's death. And the action of the executive authorities in such matters was so little regulated by reason and justice, was so arbitrary and uncertain, at one moment inflicting the most violent punishments without a shadow of real evidence against the accused, and at another permitting the most notorious crimes to remain unnoticed, that the mere circumstance of persons, however innocently connected by chance of time and place with any crime, seeking to put themselves out of the way of the officers of justice was no presumption of their guilt. But the Cardinal di Montalto was abundantly able to have protected Vittoria and her mother in these circumstances if they had needed it. And, again, why had her mother more cause to fear the pursuit of the police than her father? But, in any case, it is impossible not to feel that the roof of the Prince Orsini ought to have been, under the circumstances, the very last in Rome to which Vittoria should have had recourse.

Rome heard without surprise, though not without much disgust, that a marriage was forthwith to take place between Prince Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, and Vittoria Accoramboni. But, in the mean time, the officers of justice, stimulated, it would seem, by the extraordinary character of the circumstances, had, despite the Cardinal di Montalto's desire to the contrary, commenced a more than usually active investigation into the murder. The bargello succeeded in capturing the Mancino. And on his second examination, on the 24th of February, 1582, "without the application of torture," this man confessed that the murder had been plotted by the mother of Vittoria and the maid Caterina, and had been committed by some free lances in the employ of a certain noble, "whose name is for good and sufficient reasons not recorded."

Such are the words of the legal record, as quoted by the historian. Caterina, the maid, had been sent to the safe refuge of Orsini's feudal hold at Bracciano. This woman, according to some of the accounts of the story, was the sister of the bandit Mancino.

Very little mystery, therefore, seems to hang about the main points of the story. The Countess Accoramboni had never given up her ambitious hope of seeing her daughter the wife of one of Rome's greatest nobles, whose first consort had been a sovereign princess. Her bandit son Marcello, who had been equally anxious for the marriage of his sister with the chief of the great Orsini family, had, in conjunction with his mother, determined that the marriage with Peretti, brought about by his father, should not frustrate their hopes and plans; and the noble suitor himself, who had with his own hands embarrassed himself of his first wife, and who had no lack of men at his beck perfectly ready to do any deed of blood he might command them, had, without any difficulty, as we may well suppose, fallen in with their views, as to the best method of attaining the object of his wishes. The murder was, there can be no question, concocted by the Signora Accoramboni, her son Marcello, and Prince Paolo Giordano Orsini. But it is upon the cards—just upon the cards—that Vittoria herself may not have had any guilty knowledge of the plot. It is true, she is recorded to have joined her mother-in-law in imploring her husband not to go out on the fatal expedition which led him to his murderers. True, also, that she composed an elegy on his fate, still extant, in very unexceptionable Petrarchian verse. But the entreaties of a young wife to a young husband not to expose himself to personal danger for the sake of succouring her brother, might very easily, as everybody can understand, be so shaped as to act as so many incitements to him to meet the peril. And as for the Petrarchian elegy, if, as there is reason to suppose, it gave no umbrage to the noble Orsini, we can hardly be justified in attributing to it any great weight as an exposition of her genuine sentiments. On the other hand, there is the damning fact of her all but immediate residence in the house of the man whom all Rome *knew*, it may be said, to be the murderer of her husband. Even supposing that Orsini and her mother succeeded in persuading her that he was innocent of any connexion with the crime, still the suspicion, however erroneous, which attached to him, ought to have made it impossible for her to think of availing herself of such an asylum.

The judicial investigation, as has been said, had succeeded in obtaining evidence against the Accorambonis, mother and son, and against a prince whose name the police records were afraid to mention. But with this information Justice contented herself. No further steps were taken in the matter, at the urgent request of the Cardinal di Montalto. The Mancino was released from prison, and sent away to his own native village, with the intimation that his life

would be forfeited if he left it without express permission from Rome. And thus far all was decorously wiped up; and the disagreeables were confined to the unlucky Peretti, who had lost his life—not altogether without affording by his death a useful social example—for having dared to marry one who was desired by a Roman prince; and to his poor mother and uncle, who had philosophy enough to remark that such things must be expected in this world. But still all was not quite satisfactorily settled. The Duke of Bracciano had publicly announced his intention of forthwith marrying the lovely widow, who had so confidently flown to his protection. For the strong disapprobation of all the great Orsini clan of such a match the powerful head of the house seems to have cared little. But there were other and more powerful personages, as has been already observed, to whom such a marriage was exceedingly distasteful. The Medici conceived that the lustre of their name would be tarnished by the misalliance of one who had once been connected by marriage with their own race. And the two brothers of the ill-starred Isabella, the Duke of Florence and the cardinal, thought it hard that, after having connived at the murder of their sister for the sake of preserving immaculate the fair fame of both the Medici and Orsini name, their partner in the enterprise should now spoil all by this degrading alliance. The Cardinal dei Medici, therefore, and the Spanish ambassador, whose master fully entered into the feelings of his friend and ally, the Duke of Florence, on this subject, went together to Pope Gregory, and besought him to prevent so great a scandal as the intended marriage. The Pope found it impossible to refuse two such applicants, and he accordingly issued his precept to Orsini to contract no such marriage without express license from him, or, after his death, from his successor. Moreover, as papal precepts addressed to an Orsini were not always very sure of meeting with obedience, to make all sure, he shut up Vittoria in the castle of St. Angelo.

The Medici had insisted to the Pope on the "scandal" of the marriage they wished to prevent. And scandalous enough such a marriage would assuredly have been under the circumstances of the case. But it is worth remarking, that the only ground of scandal thought of or mentioned, was the inequality of birth between the parties. And the papal prohibition was based on this ground alone.

As is usual with them, the old historians who have left us the record of the facts of this strange story, are very chary in the matter of dates. But with regard to this imprisonment of Vittoria, they do furnish us with a couple of them. She was sent to Saint Angelo in January, 1583, and remained there till the tenth of April, 1585. The latter day there was no mistaking, as it was one of the great epochs of Roman history. On the tenth of April, 1585, died Pope Gregory the Thirteenth.

## CHAPTER VI. LOOKING FOR ST. PETER'S KEYS, AND FINDING THEM.

THE reader of papal history is often struck by the extreme swiftness with which the acts of a pope are undone and reversed as soon as ever the breath is out of his body. It is like the action of a spring, which flies back to its original form and position instantly on the removal of the force which has compressed it. This, again, is one of the consequences and evidences of a state of society governed not by law, but by personal interest, favour, and privilege. Power passes from top to bottom of the social scale into new hands, and, as a natural and recognised consequence, it is wielded with quite different objects, is directed to a new set of aims, and made to subserve a new system of interests and passions.

It was quite in accordance, therefore, with the ordinary march of events in the Roman world, that Vittoria Accoramboni should be restored to liberty on the death of the pope who had imprisoned her. A powerful friend was no doubt on the watch to take instant advantage of the opportunity; for, though more than two years had elapsed since the gates of St. Angelo had closed upon her—a terribly long trial for the constancy of a swain of more than fifty years, and half as many stone, whose physicians shook their heads, as they redoubled their applications of raw flesh to his diseased limbs—her Orsini still was true; and on the very same day that ended the old pope's life, she walked forth from her prison, and returned to his protection.

Still, however, there remained considerable difficulties in the way of the marriage. The prohibition pronounced against it by Gregory the Thirteenth had been especially extended beyond his own lifetime; and the penalty pronounced in case of disobedience was that of being considered in open rebellion to the Holy See. Now, though a position of open rebellion against the sovereign was nothing new to an Orsini, and Prince Paolo Giordano was by no means likely to be definitively deterred from doing that on which his heart was set by the threat of it, yet it was a sufficiently serious matter to make it very desirable that, if possible, he should attain his object without incurring it. Again, in case the Cardinal di Montalto should be elected pope, as all Rome supposed he would be, it was natural to suppose that he would be little inclined to permit the marriage which his predecessor had forbidden. The object of the prince, therefore, was to obtain a juridical opinion to the effect that Gregory's prohibition ceased to have force after his death; and then to celebrate the marriage before the next pope could be elected.

The intervals between the end of one pope's reign and the beginning of that of his successor were always times of extra licence, turbulence, violence, and lawlessness. And many things were done during these interregnums which, bad as the papal government was at all times, would not have been done while the chair of St. Peter was occupied. And these frequently recurring

periods of all but total anarchy varied, of course, in duration, according to the amount of difficulty experienced and time consumed by the cardinals in coming to such a degree of agreement as was necessary for the election of a new pope. In the present case, Orsini flattered himself that he should have plenty of time to accomplish his marriage before the conclave could come to an election. For though it was very generally believed that Montalto would be pope, it was perfectly well understood that this result would only be brought about as a compromise between strong parties in the conclave, each sufficiently powerful to prevent their opponents' success, but not able to elect their own candidate. It was thought, therefore, that the election of Cardinal di Montalto would not be decided on until after there had been a certain amount of struggle and trying of their respective strength by the opposing factions.

Orsini's first step was not a difficult one. Theologians of respectable standing were readily found, who declared that the prohibition was valid only during the reign of the pope who pronounced it. It might probably have been less easy to find canonists willing to support the opposite opinion while there was no pope on the throne, and an Orsini wished for a contrary decision. Still the law required that Vittoria's nearest relations should consent to the marriage. It would seem that her father must have died during the interval that had elapsed since her marriage with Peretti; for we do not hear of any application having been made to him, but to her brothers, who, after their father's death, were, for this purpose, their sister's legal guardians. The consent of the three younger brothers appears to have been obtained without any difficulty; but the elder, the young man of saintly morals, who had become Bishop of Fossombrone, absolutely refused to permit the match.

This hitch in the accomplishment of his object seems to have given Orsini more trouble than it might have been supposed he would have permitted it to do. The spectacle of the great chieftain of the house of Orsini waiting, and waiting in vain, for the consent to his marriage of the low-born bishop of an obscure little town in the Umbrian Apennines, seems strange to us, and must, one would think, have seemed something more than strange to the noble lover. And this consideration suggests the probability, that his anxiety that all should be done with scrupulous legality may have been due rather to the lady, or to that superior and managing woman, her mother, on her behalf. When young ladies just out of their teens marry infirm old nobles of fifty, they are apt to evince a much more lively respect for, and interest in, law and its provisions, than might be expected from the giddiness natural to their age and sex.

But from whatever quarter proceeded this unusual stickling for legality, certain it is that the anxious couple spared no pains to attain it. But that troublesome brother with his saintly morals was immovable. Whether it were that the holy



man had never got over his discomfiture in his scheme of disposing of his sister to that pillar of the Church, the most reverend Cardinal Farnese, or whether, as a bishop, he was especially afraid of doing what might naturally be supposed to be most offensive to the man who would in all probability be pope in a few days, it is certain that no instances could obtain from him the desired consent. And the conclave was sitting all this while—and it was a long journey from Rome to Fossombrone—and precious time was being lost. The conclave might declare their election any day; and Vittoria might be marched back again to St. Angelo as quickly after the election of the new pope as she had escaped from it after the death of the old one. It was determined, however, to try one more urgent appeal to the obstinate bishop, brother, and a courier was despatched, we are told, on relays of horses, with orders to spare neither horse nor man for the bringing back an answer with the utmost speed.

In the mean time, however, the conclave of cardinals had been getting on with their work, and had arrived at the conclusion that the best compromise to be made between the contending parties was the election of the infirm Cardinal di Montalto, who was sure not to last long, sooner than had been expected. The old pope had died on the 14th of April, and on the 24th it was known that the election was made. The courier from Fossombrone had not returned, and Vittoria and her prince felt that, legal or not legal, it was now or never the moment for their marriage. There was not an instant to be lost, and the wedding was solemnised on the very same day that the Cardinal di Montalto was proclaimed pope by the name of Sixtus the Fifth.

Nothing could have been more insulting to the new pope than this marriage; performed as if in defiance of him, at the very moment it was known that he was the new sovereign. It was as if the parties to it had hesitated to fly in the face of the late pope's prohibition as long as they feared the possibility of the election of some strong-handed and energetic ruler, and had only ventured on defying him when they were assured that they would have to deal with the weak and all but imbecile Cardinal di Montalto. But though deeply offended at the manner in which the thing had been done, it is probable that the old man was not much surprised to find, when he came out from the conclave, that Orsini and his niece-in-law had availed themselves of the license of an interregnum to effect what it was notorious that they desired.

But if Pope Sixtus was not surprised, a very great and by no means agreeable surprise awaited the Prince Orsini, in common with all the rest of the Eternal City.

The transformation of a cardinal into a pope is, in all cases, a great and remarkable one, watched, canvassed, and speculated on with intense interest by the court and city of Rome, and indeed, in those days, by the whole of

Christendom. But never had such a transformation been seen as that which struck all Rome mute with astonishment, and half of it with terror, when the weak and meek old Mendicant friar Felix Peretti came forth from the conclave as Sixtus the Fifth. Upright as an arrow, imperious and dignified in gesture and bearing, firm of step and keen of eye, the new pope advanced to the altar to celebrate the service which is a pope's first duty, and pronounced the sacred words in strong ringing tones, which came from as sound a chest as any man that heard him could boast. The tottering gait, the bent body, the distressing cough, the downcast eye, the humble bearing, had all vanished as by magic. The astonished cardinals quailed before the power they had created, as Frankenstein before the being he had called to life. The deed was irrevocable. But probably there was not a single cardinal there who would not have given much to undo what had been done. Nothing, of course, remained but to bend the head with such humility as they might to a ruler who evidently intended to rule them in earnest. The congratulations and obeisances had to be made, and were made humbly, to the peasant's son by Estes, Farneses, Savellis, and all the greatest and proudest names in Rome. The Cardinal dei Medici only, as is recorded, ventured, in offering his congratulations, to slide among them some word of remark on the wondrously restorative power which, by God's blessing, the papal consecration had exercised on his holiness.

"Truly," replied Sixtus, "I have been many years looking for the keys of St. Peter, and had to keep my eyes on the earth to find them. Having found them, I can raise my eyes to heaven, henceforward to look earthwards no more."

However alarmed and disgusted Rome was, at the promise of vigour and strong-handed government in the new sovereign, the Roman world could not refuse its praise and admiration of the skilful and consistent hypocrisy of years, which had worked to so successful a result. And we, while branding as it deserves so base and degrading a system of ethics, and abominating the social system which generates and fosters it, must needs admit that the consummate hypocrite—the "great friar," as old Gregory admirably called him—governed Rome and his states to better purpose than any pope since. Justice was, if severely, at least equitably exercised. The peasant's son quailed before none of the turbulent feudatories, who had been the terror of preceding popes. Rome, to its infinite surprise, became peaceable and safe. The brigands and bandits were mercilessly extirpated. The roads were no longer dangerous to property and life. And malefactors, and lawless men of all ranks, found that the States of the Pope, instead of being, as hitherto, their own special refuge and territory, were the least safe abiding-place for them in all Italy.

Paolo Giordano Orsini was not among the least thunderstruck at the new character in which



Sixtus the Fifth showed himself. Besides that the entire course of his life and habits was such as to render any strong and vigorous occupant of St. Peter's chair especially obnoxious to him, he had the consciousness of having first deeply injured the Pope in the most cruel manner, and then recently insulted him by a most audacious defiance of his authority. It was with no easy mind, therefore, that the prince presented himself at the first general reception, when all the lay and ecclesiastical notabilities of Rome went to kiss the foot of their new sovereign. He had counted on observing narrowly the Pope's manner to him when he should, in his turn, kneel before him, and say his few words of compliment, and judging thence how far Rome might be a safe home for him for the future. Sixtus showed no sign of anger, but he made no word of answer to Orsini's address. The omen was considered rather a discouraging one. It reminds one of the showman, who, when his head was in the lion's mouth, said, "If he wags his tail I am a lost man." Orsini thought that the Pope had for a moment glanced sternly at him; and there was an anxious consideration whether this glance was to be deemed equivalent to the wag of the lion's tail. It was decided that the omen was not sufficiently clear; and the prince determined on learning with greater certainty what he had to expect from the new pope, before he made up his mind as to his own line of conduct.

He made application, therefore, for a private audience, which was at once granted him; and on an appointed day, having, as the historians tell us, learned by heart the speech he meant to address to the Pope, he presented himself for the third time before the old man whose nephew he had murdered, and who knew that he was the murderer, while on his part Orsini was perfectly aware that he knew it. The interview must have been one which a student of human character and passions would have liked (safely ensconced out of harm's way behind some curtain in the audience chamber) to have witnessed. We must picture to ourselves Sixtus, upright and rigid, on his seat of state, somewhat stern of eye and feature, but calm, impassible, perfectly self-possessed, and utterly inscrutable in his unimpassioned gravity. The unwieldy monster of bloated corpulence before him performs the ceremonial kiss on the sacred slipper, as we may well suppose, with scarcely less physical trouble and difficulty than mental scorn and rebellious pride. The arrogant and lawless ruffian noble stands cowed before the stern old man, and begins, not without visible signs of being ill at ease, his crammed speech.

He congratulated Sixtus on having attained a dignity which, &c. &c., prosperity of the time, pride of Rome, and happiness of the entire world, &c. &c.

Sixtus sat silent, and made no sign.

Orsini was forced to recommence, and this time congratulated *himself* on the happiness of living under so gracious, so clement, and worthy a sovereign.

Still the Pope neither moved a muscle nor breathed a sound.

The culprit's mind misgave him more and more; he became evidently disconcerted, and, as the historian writes, "his tongue vacillated." Yet it was impossible to stand silent while that cold, grave eye was bent upon him, as waiting to hear the real business on which he had sought an audience, and he essayed to falter something about offering himself and all his power and influence to his sovereign.

Then at length Sixtus spoke.

"What your deeds have been," he said, "to me and mine, Duke of Bracciano, your own conscience is now telling you, quite as well as I could do. But reassure yourself! That which has been done against Francesco Peretti, or against Felix, Cardinal di Montalto, I pardon you, as fully and as surely as I warn you to hope for no pardon for aught which shall henceforward be done against Sixtus. Go, clear your house and your estates of the lawless followers and bandits that you feed and give asylum to. Go! and obey!"

The last words were accompanied by one of those terrible lightning glances which all the historians of this remarkable man speak of as having had power to make the stoutest heart quail. The haughtiest and most masterful of Rome's lawless barons slunk from the Mendicant monk's presence like a whipped cur.

#### INVENTORS AND INVENTIONS.

Is it true that the world has never known its greatest men? Have all its benefactors been ignored and despised; or rather, have not some occasionally found timely recognition and fitting reward? Human nature is stubborn, and men are unwilling to be turned out of their own way; but the hardest natures gradually soften into a new mould if pressed long enough, and the most wilful feet take to unaccustomed paths after those paths have been well trodden by their neighbours. Every new invention has had its own special fight before it could get its hearing. Who recognises the prince in the beggar? Who sees the full-fledged eagle in that ordinary looking and somewhat unprepossessing egg? Who could always foretell that the new invention, untried and unproved, was a world's blessing in disguise, an embryo helper forward of humanity? We do not wish to uphold ignorance in any form, but we must be just; and really those various Mr. Bat's Eyes may be pardoned for not seeing all that Christiana and Mercy set out to seek. Besides, every inventor has not been wronged by his generation: some have, and most grievously, but not all. We will follow the course taken by Mr. John Timbs, in his new book, *Stories of Inventors and their Discoveries*; and, for every persecuted benefactor of society, we will find at the least two who met their reward.

We begin with Archimedes, as of course. For, though the Pyramids were built, and the monoliths raised; though the huge caves of Elephantia and the City of Petra had been hewn out of the

living rock, and the Pelasgians—or who?—had built their Cyclopean walls wherever they had had the chance, yet Archimedes always stands first on the list of mechanical discoverers, as if the world had never known crank or pulley till he made both, and had never raised a stone bigger than a man's hand. But we must not forget that even Archimedes stood upon the shoulders of the past. Well! Archimedes was no martyr. His Eureka, his boast about the world and the lever, were household words in every Greek mouth; his screw is one of the principal motors of the present day; and his catapults and burning-glasses, his balistæ and the Galley of Heiro received their due honours then, and remain unsurpassed even yet. The Great Eastern is not equal to that Galley of Heiro, with its temples and its baths, its storehouses, water tanks, and six hundred A.B.s sitting down to fish and flour in the fore-castle. Honoured by his sovereign, respected by the people, revered by posterity, the ghost of brave old Archimedes, wandering palely on the banks of the Styx, has no reason to complain of the injustice of humanity.

No one was hung, drawn, or quartered for the magnet; only Columbus, when the needle varied in the American Atlantic, had to improvise a theory to save, perhaps, his life from the mutinous hands of his terrified sailors. Whether the Chinese, to whom the honour of the discovery belongs, have a martyr magnetiser, like their martyr potter Pousa—now a god, or something like it—we do not know; but, according to all accounts, their Magnetis Mountain, which played Sindbad such a sorry trick, has made martyrs and victims enough. Printing made a martyr, in a small way, of poor Guttenberg, who, what with debt (he spent the whole of a large private fortune in bringing his movable blocks to perfection), political frays, the ill-will of the priests, and the enmity of the guild of writers, had but a troubled life of it. But though he was persecuted, and though Faust was held as nothing better than lieutenant and vice-regent of the devil, all the early printers were not so reviled. Old Caxton was honoured as he deserved; and cost the parish good hard money for the “iijj torches, and the belle used at his bureying.” Guttenberg's small napkin-press-like printing machine has been slightly distanced now by Applegarth's machines of eight cylinders, which print twelve thousand impressions of the Times per hour; by Messrs. Hoe's of ten cylinders, which print twenty thousand in the hour; and by that other American monster, which can print twenty-two thousand double impressions in the same time. Little did the good old German philosopher and enthusiast dream of where his invention would extend when he first hewed out his wooden movable blocks.

Of gunpowder and its discoverers we need not speak. It has had its martyrs by the million, and is altogether too ferocious a compound for us to meddle with. Torricelli and Pascal, Réaumur and Fahrenheit, with their barometers and thermometers, are plea-

santer subjects to consider; so is Guericke, with his air-pump; so are all the inventors of the various diving-bells, by which human beings can go down among the sea-nymphs and the coral-roots, and crawl through the mazes of brown, green, and purple weed, growing in tufted bowers among the arches of the wrecks. The latest of these diving-bells is the American Nautilus, where the ballast or descending power is water, and where the air for breathing is condensed. This American Nautilus seems to be about the greatest success yet made in the diving-bell department, allowing men to remain under water longer than any other contrivance hitherto devised, and with less risk of accident or suffocation. For the race of automata we confess to little absolute sympathy; though, relatively, both as furtherances to the science of pure mechanics, and as examples of skill and ingenuity, they are not without considerable value. They are among the earliest and most universal creations of man. India, China, and Japan, all have them in some or other form; Egypt and Greece both dealt largely in them for their mysteries and initiations. Greece, indeed, patronised them for pleasure, witness the Wooden Region, made by Archytas of Tarentum; the Homeric Tripods; the Venuses, that had to be tied up at night to prevent their rambling about unbidden; and other things, which will readily be found by classical scholars not afraid of “roots.” Then there were various and sundry automata in the Dark Ages; Friar Bacon's Brazen Head was one, and the thirty years' similar labour of Albertus Magnus was another—that head, which, when it began to speak, Thomas of Aquinas broke to pieces, under fear and pain of the devil, as usual. Poor Alex of Provence fared badly with his invention. He had discovered the fact that two instruments tuned in unison were what we should now term harmoniously sympathetic. He made an automaton skeleton, placed it in the window, put a guitar in its hand, and played another instrument, tuned in unison and set at a distance. The automaton skeleton moved its fingers; sounds were heard from the guitar; the populace believed it was all a work of magic and witchcraft; and poor Alex and the skeleton were burnt together, by command of the parliament. This was in 1674—think, reader! Not yet two hundred years ago! Vaucanson's Duck was a grand triumph over all sorts of difficulties. Every bone was anatomically correct, and the duck did all that a live duck should do: eat, drank, dabbled with its beak in the true, quick, duck-like manner, moved its wings, and even quacked. It did more than this, too; but we need not particularise further. Droz the elder, made a writing boy; Droz the younger, a pianoforte boy; and Droz the elder got caught by the Spanish Inquisition, and narrowly escaped with his life. It was a dangerous amusement in those days to fashion automata that could, by any possibility, be supposed to be imps or familiars; and as even a pet dog or a tame toad might bring a person to the stake as a necromancer, what

risks must have hung round a self-moving skeleton, or a brazen head that could speak with a human voice! The Chess-player, invented by De Kempelen, was the most celebrated of all the later automata; but this, however, turned rather upon the cleverness of sleight-of-hand than upon the wonders of mechanics, and ranks more as a trick than as a matter of science. De Kempelen also made a speaking automaton, which said distinctly, "Romanorum Imperator semper Augustus;" "Leopold's Secundus;" "Vous êtes mon ami;" "Je vous aime de tout mon cœur." He had long laboured at this piece of mechanism, but could only get the simple utterance of the sounds *o*, *ou*, and *e*: *i* and *u* would not come at any price, neither would the consonants. Then he devised an apparatus, similar in action and construction to the human mouth and teeth, and this he placed at the extremity of the vocal tube. Good French and Latin were the results. The Americans also made a Speaking Machine, but the inventor, Mr. Reale, destroyed his work of sixteen years, in a moment of what people call "frenzy." Afterwards, in 1846, Professor Faber exhibited in the Egyptian Hall his Euphonia, which is held to be the best speaking automaton of all. Houdin is our latest wonder in the mechanical way; but every one knows everything about him: his singing nightingale, magic boxes with rings in them that no mortal hands ever put there, his drawing figure, which so ominously broke its pencil when it began the crown for the young Count de Paris, his tricks, and his triumphs; his marvels with cards, eggs, birds, hats, bottles, and extinguishers. We have them all off by heart, and pleasant lessons they were to learn, too! Well! of these mechanical inventions, excepting the questionable reputation that clung round Albertus Magnus, and the unhappy fate of Alex, there are none to whom an indiscriminating public showed marked ingratitude; while, in later days, fame, honour, and riches have heaped themselves up in overwhelming piles, on the heads of those who have showed inventive talent or mechanical skill. We, the advocates of human nature as a whole, are glad of this, as confirmatory of our own theory.

There is no use in talking of the various schemes for aerial ships, or of the thousand and one balloons that have been sent up on new principles and with perfect good faith that each of those new principles was going to inaugurate a new era in air navigation. Perhaps aerial ships will be actual, commercial, and trading facts, before long; perhaps the London General Balloon Company will take the place of the London General Omnibus Company, with stations on the roof-tops of certain accommodating British householders. Excepting the martyrs of the experiment, beginning with Icarus and ending with his American imitators of the other day, aerial navigation has not been a very ill-used pursuit. To be sure, people do say that they are all cracked who think it can ever be made of positive every-day use; but then every new thing has been a sign of madness from time

immemorial, and there is no reason why this new thing should be exempt. Roger Bacon and the Marquis of Worcester were both thought to be mad when they foreshadowed steam-engines and telescopes; Paracelsus was evilly looked on for the sake of his new drug, opium; and Napier of Merchiston, when he asserted that he could set ships on fire by a burning-glass, sail under water, by help of a certain machine destroy thirty thousand Turks without the risk of losing one Christian, manure profitably with common salt, and calculate by logarithms, was held as little better than a maniac, if not a wizard, which was worse. Rupert and his experiments fared better. But then Rupert was a prince, closely connected with the blood royal, and royalty in those days meant something more than taking off one's hat, or standing while the national air was played. Rupert did many noticeable philosophic things, fiery soldier of fortune though he was: he brought forward Van Siegen's invention of mezzotint, made the toy called Prince Rupert's drops, which no one can rightly explain even now; blew up rocks and mines under water, made an hydraulic machine, improved the naval quadrant, made glass at Chelsea, cast hail-shot, and devised the useful metal since called "Prince's metal." He worked luxuriously at Windsor Castle, of which his cousin, Charles the Second, appointed him governor; and there in his apartment swords and crucibles, rapiers, retorts, spurs, and mathematical instruments lay scattered all about in a confusion befitting his multiplex life.

The first watchmaker was a great man. Was he accused of witchcraft, and burned at the stake for tampering with the mysterious laws of life and motion? We do not know: he might have been. And John Harrison of Faulby, the country carpenter's uneducated son, and the maker of the first marine chronometer, was a great man too; and he did not suffer by his invention. Quite the contrary; for he got twenty thousand pounds for it, when, after forty years' incessant labour, he had fully perfected it, and made it the reliable creation that it is now. No, all the inventors and discoverers have not suffered. True, Columbus was ungratefully treated, and Galileo knew (under a dominant priesthood) more of the superstition and cruelty than of the recognition and gratitude, of men; but all have not been so evilly handled. To William Hervey no one has grudged honours, though to be sure poor Servetus was burned, partly for disproving the theory then existing that the veins carried the blood to the various parts of the body, a disapproval afterwards confirmed by Harvey. Dr. Jenner has his statue and his colleges, and rewards were not wanting even in his lifetime. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had a harder fight to go through than fell to his lot, and yet she was victorious in the end. To Newton and Herschel, Lord Rosse and Le Verrier, to Niepce, Daguerre, Fox, Talbot, and Wheatstone, to Brewster and Davy, the world owes great and glorious benefits; but we never heard of any

disposition to repay those benefits with ingratitude. So, after all, men and women are not so bad as it sometimes suits bystanders to say, and humanity is of smoother skin than the cynical will allow.

Was not Watt honoured? Did not George Stephenson find backers, friends, and disciples? Did not Arkwright, the Bolton barber, make a colossal fortune? And what would be the Peels and the Marshalls, the Hargreaves and the Cromptons, if their ancestors had not been inventors? Ah, well! humanity has something to answer for here; for the machinery inventors, the men who have made straps and wheels and pulleys do the work of living thews and sinews, have seldom got well off in the outset. They interfered with existing rights, with a man's vested interest in his own muscles, and consequently had every working hand dead against them, at all events for a time, and until the sum of comparative advantage was pretty clearly made out. Hargreaves, the inventor of the spinning-jenny, died at Nottingham in great poverty and distress; Crompton's mule was taken to pieces for safety against the mobs, warring and raging against all new-fangled machinery; Cartwright was defrauded; the elder Peel had his carding-machines broken, and was finally driven out of the country where he lived; Jacquard, the great benefactor of all figure-pattern weavers, made no fortune by his invention, but left his family in such poverty that they were obliged to offer for sale the golden medal which Louis the Eighteenth had given him. The Chamber of Commerce at Lyons generously bought the medal, and gave twenty-four pounds for it—being exactly four pounds more than the intrinsic value of the gold! Earlier than all this, we find Lee, the first stocking-weaver, dying in Paris, heart-broken by poverty and disappointment; while, later, John Lombe is poisoned by the Italians, whose secret of silk-weaving he stole and transplanted into England. No: the history of machine inventors is not, on the whole, satisfactory; for we rarely find that those who originated an idea got anything by it excepting persecution and hatred, while all the great fortunes made, have some sly taint or other in some out-of-the-way corner, where only the most prying and impolite of biographers would think of looking. Even the highest names are not quite stable, and in the most portly bankers' books may be found a few dog's-eared pages with a smirch and a stain over the larger figures.

Street gas-lighting had a hard day of it once, when a committee of the Royal Society, appointed by government, met to decide on its

merits. It was almost hunted to the death then, and tossed over to the kites and crows. Brougham, Davy, Wollaston, and Watt, were all dead against the possibility of such a plan. Brougham bitterly ridiculed Accum the chemist, and one of the upholders and believers in the idea; and Sir Humphrey Davy asked, with a scientific sneer, if the dome of Saint Paul's were to be taken as a gasometer? Frederick Albert Winsor and his scheme stood their ground; and after the due and proper amount of badgering which such an innovation must expect, the point was gained, and London was lighted with gas. This was in 1825; though the first triumphant experiment of lighting Saint James's Park had been made three years earlier, namely, in 1822.

But we have not come to the end of street-lighting yet; though, indeed, nothing has hitherto been discovered which can satisfactorily supersede coal gas. But it has to come, being among the future "destinies" of science. The patent air-light (from hydro-carbon mixed with atmospheric air) cost thirty thousand pounds in the experiments which were made, to see if it would do better than gas—but it failed; and though the lime ball, the Bude, and the electric lights, are all flaming successes in themselves, they are all too expensive for the open streets and public buildings. Still we may be very sure that street-lighting, like many other things, is in its infancy, and that, when it comes to maturity, it will be widely different to what it is now. The question is stirring, evidently. We hear of sundry working chemists poring over all sorts of calculations and analyses, preparatory to setting the world in a blaze with a new light; we may rest assured that our gas-lamps will be blown out, and some new-fashioned flames take their place. It is the way of the world—the way by which all inventions have fought, risen, culminated, and gone out, when a better thing has been discovered.

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